
Different Types of Thesis Statements

GENERAL TIPS

- A thesis statement must be specific, but does not over-simplify your topic.
- Although thesis statements should be as succinct as possible, two sentence thesis statements are okay.
- It is perfectly fine to have multiple drafts of your thesis throughout the writing process.

GENERAL CONSTRUCTION

OPINION + EVIDENCE + **ORGANIZATION** = THESIS STATEMENT

TYPES

1. Argumentative

- In an argumentative essay, you are making a claim about a topic and justifying your claim with reasons and evidence.
 - Note: This is the most common type of paper you will write as an undergraduate
- Common kinds of claims: opinions, policy proposals, evaluations, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation.
- These claims are always statements people could disagree with because your aim is to convince your readers of your position with your reasons and evidence.

Structure:

1. *Your claim/assertion*
2. The reasons/evidence to support this claim (or categories of analysis)
3. **The order in which you'll present your reasons and evidence**

Examples:

- *Tutors should not write essays for their students* because the students will not benefit or grow as writers from this form of assistance since the **students do not learn how to identify and fix their mistakes by themselves**.
- *The public would benefit from additional legislation limiting gun ownership* because such legislation will reduce the number of casualties from suicides, domestic abuse, and mass shootings.

2. Analytical

- Analytical papers break down ideas or issues into component parts, evaluate the issue or idea, and present this breakdown/evaluation to your audience.

Structure:

1. *What you're analyzing (topic)*
2. The specific categories of your analysis
3. **The order in which you will be presenting your analysis**

Examples:

- An analysis of *Hamlet's supernatural occurrences* reveals that the setting of Denmark is characterized by its possession and demise under the otherworldly as

seen through the **imagery and interactions of Hamlet with the ghost of King Hamlet and Yorick's skull.**

- *The increased obesity rate of poor Americans* directly correlates to economic factors, including **a low minimum wage, the overpricing of healthy produce, the increased availability of inexpensive fast food, and a lack of time and money to buy and prepare healthier options.**

3. Explanatory/Expository

- Explanatory papers explain an idea/topic/concept to an audience.
- These papers can be tricky for students because most undergraduate essays focus on analysis. Generally, explanatory papers do not want you to make any kind of argumentative claim about your topic. Rather, you should merely explain it.

Structure:

1. *What is going to be explained (topic)*
2. The categories used to organize your explanation (how you divide up the topic)
3. **The order in which you are presenting your categories**

Examples:

- *The process of writing an essay* includes **brainstorming, outlining, and writing drafts.**
- *The experiment* consisted of **collecting apis mellifera beehives infected with varroa destructor mites, treating half of the hives with formic acid, and monitoring the differences between the treated and untreated hives.**
- *The Columbian Exchange changed the New World and the Old World* by **exchanging diseases, food products, and technology.**
 - Note: this is explanatory rather than argumentative because you are not making a value judgement on whether the exchange was good or bad. The essay that follows would merely explain the exchange.
- A BAD example: “The Columbian Exchange was a horrible event that damaged the New World more than it damaged the Old World and exemplified the racism of colonialism.”
 - Note: This statement is far too argumentative to be an expository thesis statement.
 - It uses strong language (“horrible,” “damaged”)
 - Makes assertions (the extent of the damage & that the change was ONLY damaging) that an opponent could debate.
 - Try to eliminate value judgements from your expository thesis statements.

REFERENCES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Techniques of College Writing: The Thesis Statement and Beyond.* Kathleen Moore and Susie Cassel. (Available at Rivera Library)
- “Tips and Examples for Writing Thesis Statements”
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/thesis_statement_tips.html
- “Crafting a Thesis for an Expository Essay”
http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/cavalcade/pdf/feb2004/p36-37_thesis_exp_essay.pdf