



WRITING A THESIS

What is a thesis?

WHAT IS A THESIS?

Every thesis statement is an argument to be proved and supported by the body of the essay.

If your essay doesn't support your thesis statement, you have two choices: change your essay or change your thesis statement.

OK, SO WHAT IS IT?

1. A controlling statement around which your paper is built
2. A clear answer to the historical question being asked – ideally in one sentence
3. A concise statement of your essay's argument
4. A point of view adopted about a historical problem
5. A proposition to be defended or argued – it should be a debatable or contestable statement.

WHAT IS IT NOT?

A statement of fact -

Woodrow Wilson was president of the United States.

UNACCEPTABLE

A statement of fact, plus opinion or judgment -

Woodrow Wilson was an effective president of the United States.

WEAK

OK, BUT I THINK HE WAS AN EFFECTIVE
PRESIDENT. WHAT MORE DO YOU NEED?

HOW
AND/OR
WHY

WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE?

Woodrow Wilson was an effective president who successfully implemented broad reform of the American economic system and re-orientated the nation's foreign policy allowing the United States to accept the mantle of global leadership in the twentieth century.

BUT I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS...

Where does it go?

In the introduction - the first paragraph of the paper.

Does it have to be one sentence?

Ideally, but not necessarily. If one sentence makes it harder to understand, then make it more.

What if I decide to change my thesis while I'm writing?

Then change it.

HOW CAN I KNOW IF IT IS A GOOD THESIS?

1. Is it clear what the project will be about?
2. Is it arguable? Is there something that has to be proven?
3. Will research be necessary to prove the thesis?
4. Is there only one main idea?
5. Is it about something in the past that is important?

WHAT THE THESIS WILL LEAD ME TO EXPECT...

As a result of the social conditions at the time, a young woman in the Middle Ages had few options for marriage, freedom, and personal privacy.

- What would you expect to read about in this essay?
- How would you expect it to be structured?

ANOTHER ESSAY...

The economic crash of 2008 demonstrated the failure of political leaders to recognize the need for effective regulation and monitoring of important sectors of the economy.

- What would you expect to read about in this essay?
- How would you expect it to be structured?

WHAT ELSE SHOULD MY INTRODUCTION HAVE?

A hook?

- If you have a good, effective, eye-catching one, then yes. Otherwise the contemporary issue you have chosen should work as a hook.

A complete explanation of the historical background?

- Absolutely not.

Other guide posts about what will be discussed?

- Yes. How are you linking your contemporary issue to the past? What events / people / themes from the past will your essay discuss.

HOW DO I SUBMIT IT?

Email a Word document or share Google doc.

File name: Your name and the word “thesis”.

Example: Isherwood Thesis.

Not: Document 1

Not: history assignment

Not: history thesis

Not: research paper thesis

Not: anything else but what I have said to do.