



Thesis Statement

Once you know the topic of your essay, you need to decide what your take on that topic is. You should be working to persuade your reader to see something about your issue from your point of view. While some topics will lend themselves to a thesis that boldly attempts to change a reader's mind on a policy issue, others will work more subtly to change how a reader perceives the significance of an event or action. If you are unsure of what type of thesis is appropriate for your essay, look over the thesis statements the readings you have completed for the course and any examples that your teacher has provided. As a general rule, however, a thesis needs to be narrow enough to be argued in the course of a paper of the length you are writing and specific enough that you can focus your discussion if the topic.

Step 1: Make a specific claim that takes a new position or that a reasonable person might disagree with.

Bad claim: Many factors contribute to a child's success in school. (too broad)

Bad claim: Apples are a healthy food. (too widely agreed upon)

Bad claim: Combining and igniting hydrogen and oxygen creates water. (fact, not claim)

Good claim: A person who wants to lose weight should strength train instead of doing other types of exercise.

Good claim: New inventions that pull water from the surrounding air will prevent the upcoming global water crisis.

Step 2: Tell your reader why or how your claim is true and why or how that is important. In other words, will your reader hear your claim and say, "so what?" If so, you need to say more.

Good thesis: Because strength training continues to burn calories long after exercise is completed, a person who wants to lose weight should prioritize weightlifting over cardiovascular exercise.

Good thesis: New inventions that pull water from the surrounding air will prevent the upcoming global water crisis, saving millions of lives.

Step 3 (Optional): Place your thesis in a broader context to help your reader understand why it is an important argument to make.

Good example: While the fitness industry used to recommend sustained cardiovascular workouts for weight loss, recent studies suggest that that this is not the most effective method. Instead, because strength training continues to burn calories long after exercise is completed, a person who wants to lose weight should prioritize weightlifting over cardiovascular exercise.

Good example: Water scarcity is a pressing issue for many in places like sub-Saharan Africa and some scientists have warned that it may become an increasingly widespread danger. However, new inventions that pull water from the surrounding air will help to solve this problem, saving millions of lives.