

Thesis Statements

What is a Thesis?

A thesis statement is a brief argument that

- Shows the paper's **scope, purpose, and direction**
- Provides a **main idea** or overall focus of the paper
- Is **specific** enough to be developed within the paper
- **Suggests a structure** for the paper



What does a thesis do?

For the writer, the thesis...

- Serves as a planning tool
- Helps to determine and clarify the paper's focus
- Becomes a reference point for all topic sentences
- Anticipates questions about the topic

For the reader, the thesis...

- Serves as a map
- Keeps the reader focused on the argument
- Engages the reader
- Offers enough detail for the reader to grasp the argument

3 Parts to a Thesis

1

Limited Subject



Make sure that the topic you've chosen isn't too broad. For example, don't write about "frogs"; instead, write about "bullfrog populations in West Virginia during the early 2000s."

2

Specific Argument



For most papers, you will need to choose something to prove. For example, you could argue that "bullfrog populations in West Virginia during the early 2000s damaged the local blueberry economy."

3

Reasoning



For each argument, you should have specific evidence to support it. For example, your thesis could look something like: "Records from West Virginia's DNR, law offices, and personal statements show that bullfrog populations in West Virginia during the early 2000s damaged the local blueberry economy."

