

Writing a Strong Thesis Statement

Every thesis statement is an argument to be proved and supported by the body of the essay. Remember, if your essay doesn't support your thesis statement, you have two choices: change your essay or change your thesis statement.

WEAK THESIS: I learned that if I procrastinate, my essays will not come out as good.

STRONG THESIS:

Say why:

For many student writers, procrastination is based on fear; this fear keeps students from improving their writing because they do not take the time to fully develop their ideas.

Say why we should care:

Students should understand that worrying about grammar and spelling too early in the writing process will actually lead to a less analytical essay.

Say how:

English teachers often overwhelm students by giving them too many things to think about when writing essays: thesis statements, grammar, spelling, organization, audience, etc.

Make specific comparisons:

The key difference between writing in high school and writing in college is that your ideas become more important than your form. Therefore, college freshmen have to learn a new way to write.

Make an evaluation:

My high school teacher's insistence on teaching me the 5-paragraph essay has actually hurt my writing skills.

Consider the consequences:

If students do not find ways to ignore their audience at first and write "shitty first drafts," they will never learn to fully develop their ideas.

Apply previous/other knowledge:

Knowing your audience is important; nevertheless, after realizing how much easier it is to write for a friend rather than a teacher, I am convinced that students should ignore their audience when writing a first draft.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Have I said something specific and meaningful? Have I used specific names, examples, dates, facts, etc., and said something about them?
- Have I said something arguable? What's the point if everyone will agree with you or if everyone already knows this?
- Can I support my thesis? Can I think of specific examples and evidence? Does every point I bring up support my thesis or do I need to revise my thesis statement?
- Is it specific enough to write about in the required number of pages? Or would someone have to write a book (or a set of encyclopedias) to fully support my thesis?
- Is my thesis relevant to the assignment? Does it do what my teacher asks (i.e. argue, summarize, compare/contrast)?
- Does it show my ability to think critically about the subject? Does it answer one or more of the 5 Ws?
- Can I combine any of the above strategies to make my thesis even stronger and still answer "yes" to the above questions?

Thesis Statement Worksheet – Make them stronger!

Directions: Revise the following sentences into a thesis statements.

1. Audience awareness is the most important part of writing.
2. It is difficult to write about topics you find boring.
3. Every reader needs to understand your points and examples.
4. Students spend most of their time thinking about grammar.
5. Not having confidence hurts your writing.