

Writing About Literature

- How to Generate a Thesis Statement

Write a thesis statement

- A thesis statement is a sentence (sometimes two) that identifies the focus and purpose for your essay.



Generating a Thesis

- **Brainstorm the topic**

*The main character in the novel,
Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli*

- **Narrow the topic**

The changes in the character of Stargirl

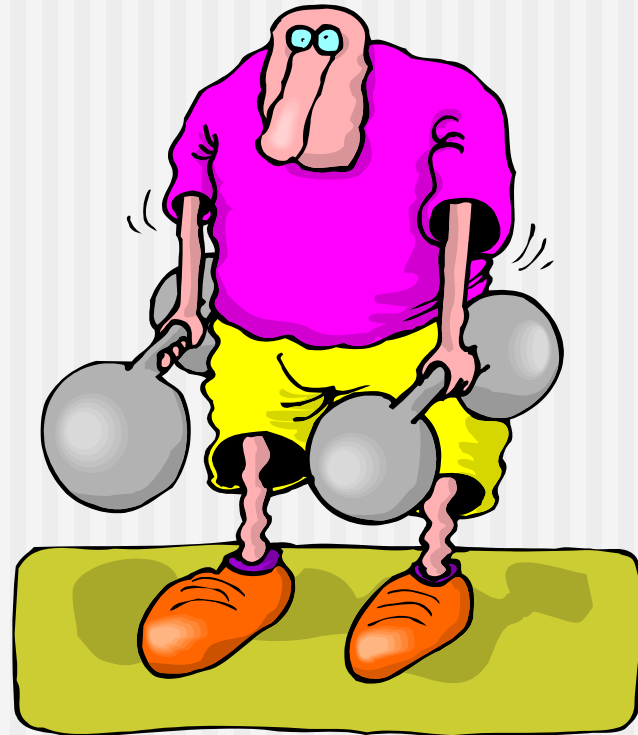
Generating a Thesis

- **Take a position on the topic**
- *Stargirl changes twice during the course of the novel. First she is an eccentric, free-spirit, later she tries to conform to the behaviors and expectations of her peers, but finally she returns to her true individualistic self.*

Generating a Thesis

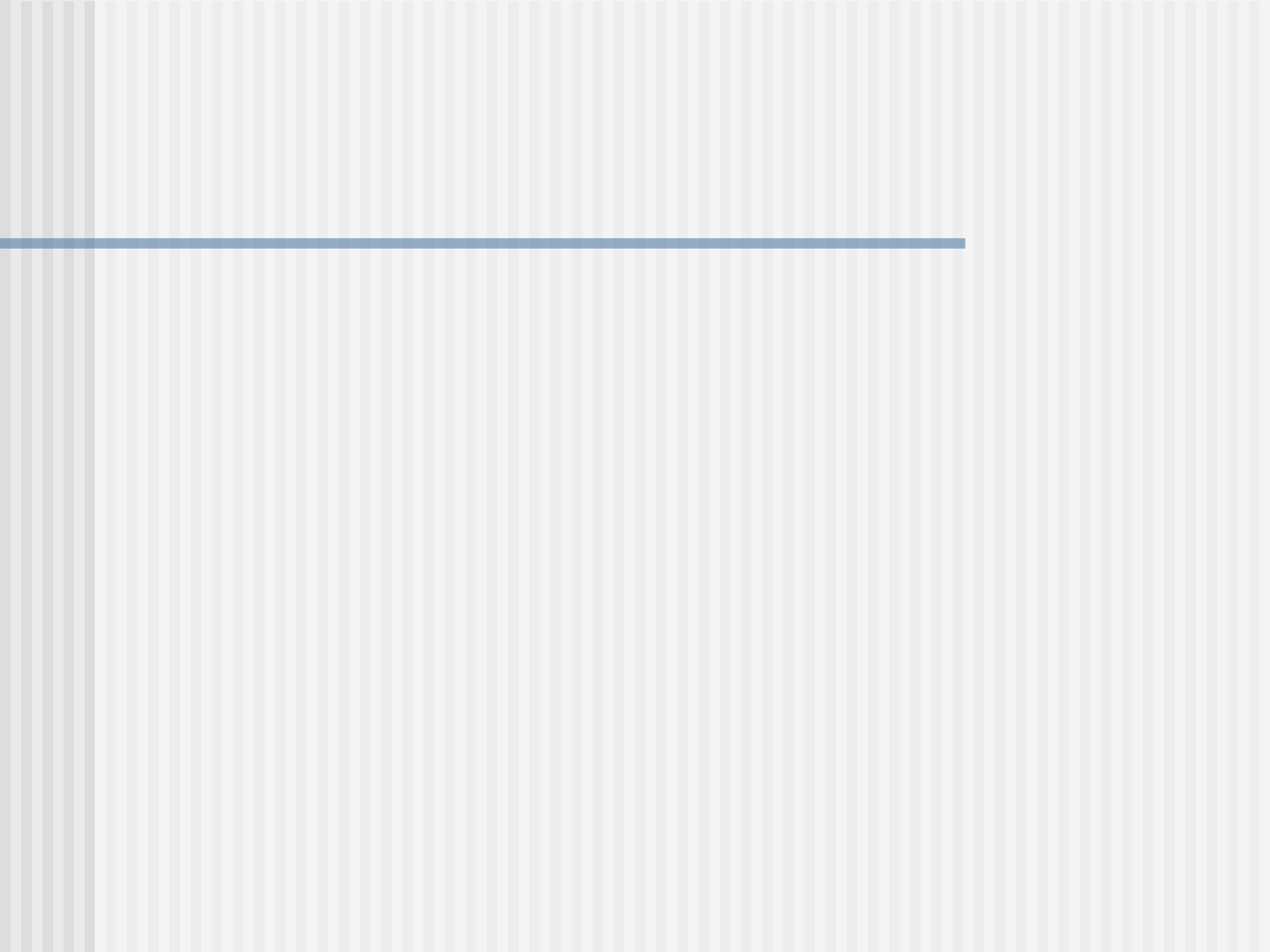
- **Make an assertion based on clearly stated support**
- *Because Stargirl returns to her original free-spirited personality, she demonstrates her rejection of the phoniness of modern society.*

How to Tell a Strong Thesis Sentence from a Weak One



A Strong Thesis Takes a Stand

- **WEAK (too vague):** The character of Norma in the short story Button Button has both positive and negative traits.
- **STRONG and SPECIFIC:** Though the dual nature of Norma makes her actions hard to predict, I believe her greedy and materialistic side overpowered her caring and selfless side, resulting in her husband Arthur's death.



A Strong Thesis Expresses One Main Idea

- **WEAK:** Arthur in Button Button is a moral man, and Norma his wife is amoral.
- **STRONG:** Since they disagree on many ethical points about the use of the mysterious button box, Arthur demonstrates he is morally superior to his wife Norma in the story Button Button.
- **HINT:** Many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like *because*, *since*, *so*, *although*, *unless* and *however*.

A Strong Thesis Statement Is Specific

- **WEAK:** Arthur and Norma in Button Button are very different.
- **Strong:** Although Arthur and Norma are a married couple, their differing views of the value of material things and the value of life show they are not compatible.