

Writing and Humanities Tutoring Center



Developing a Working Thesis

A thesis is a statement that summarizes the bulk of your argument. No doubt, you will have already been told by numerous people like teachers, tutors, and aids how important the thesis is to your essay. The key to not stressing out about your thesis is to know that it does not have to be perfect. More than likely you will revise your thesis substantially as you continue to write, developing your original ideas into new forms that will eventually turn into your final draft.

A thesis is usually a two-part sentence that summarizes your argument. The first part is **the position**. The second part is the rationale / the how. The position is what you believe in and the rationale is why you believe it or how you plan to prove it. Here are some examples:

- **Kate Chopin’s “The Story of an Hour” underscores the historical lack of inclusiveness in the feminist movement** through its detailed description of white, upper-middle class societal norms in the late 1800s.”
- **Fast food companies should not be allowed to sell lunches to public school students** because their products increased rates of obesity and diabetes in children and create lifelong unhealthy eating habits.
- By juxtaposing hand-picked art with examples of microaggressions throughout *Citizen*, Claudia Rankine grapples with how African Americans are treated as inferior by society with no regard to respecting them as citizens of the American nation.
- To some conservatives, Ron DeSantis offers a more palatable leadership style that is in line with the Republican establishment in comparison with Donald Trump. However, in reality, they hold similar political ideologies on environmental and social issues and support similar legislation and policies.

To Note: While a thesis tells the reader what the writer believes, it usually avoids using the phrase “I believe.” While some professors permit the use of “I” others do not. Therefore, it is best to omit it. Besides, it’s your paper! This, alone, proves that what is written is what YOU believe!

To Note: the rationale does not necessarily contain three distinct reasons you believe something. Although we are often taught to include three reasons in a thesis statement, this 5 paragraph essay model implies that there are only three possible responses to defend your position. This type of thesis should be avoided unless specified in the writing prompt.

Helpful Tips:

- Don’t get stuck on perfecting your thesis at the beginning stages of writing. Remember it is a **working** thesis. It might work at the beginning but not as you continue to write. You can always go back and revise it. A thesis can even be written last, after you have written the rest of the paper
- The thesis should be a unifying claim that summarizes the essay and is debatable or needs to be proved.