



## WRITER'S STUDIO RESOURCES:



# THESIS STATEMENT

### What is a thesis statement?

The thesis statement is the *main point* of an essay. It is the *big idea*, a statement of the writer's position on the topic. The thesis answers the question: "What is this essay about?"

### Why do I need a thesis statement?

The thesis provides focus and organization for an essay. Everything else – the evidence, the argumentation – supports or ties back to the thesis statement.

## How do I write a thesis statement?

A good thesis statement:

### Is Debatable

The thesis makes an *arguable claim*.

- Arguable claims take a stance on an issue with more than one side or position and promise to support the claim with evidence.
- Not arguable: *Social media technologies have had an impact on the ways people communicate.*
- Arguable: *The increasing use of social media technologies is having a negative impact on peoples' ability to communicate effectively in the real world.*

### Is Specific

The thesis is a focused, clear statement.

- Avoid vague language and generalities like the following: *Many people object to violence in the media, but violence is going down.*
- Generalities skim the surface of a topic. Specificity and focus lead to more critical analysis. For example: *While many people argue that the prevalence of violence in modern media is desensitizing American youths, studies have shown no correlation between indulging in violent media and enacting violent crimes.*

### Expresses the Point

The thesis answers the question "So what?"

- It tells readers what the essay is about and why it matters. The thesis is the entire essay boiled down to a single statement.
- A vague, unimportant statement like this: *Emoji and emoticons are used by many people in text-based conversations...*
- Can be revised to answer "So what?" and make a point: *The popularity of emoji and emoticon use in text-based conversation points to an inherent flaw in such communication—the lack of emotional markers—and indicates the important role emoting plays in human communication.*



# Drafting a Thesis

Getting Started: Formulate a working thesis in three easy steps!

*A working thesis acts as a guide to help you develop a focus for your paper and a direction for your research. Keep in mind this thesis WILL change as you learn more about your topic and develop your analysis—that's why it's called a "working" thesis!*

## Step One: State your Topic

What is your essay about?

*Ex. Social media*

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## Step Two: Generate a Question

What do you want to know about your topic? Hint: Be specific!

*Ex. How is social media affecting face-to-face communication skills?*

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## Step Three: Propose an Answer

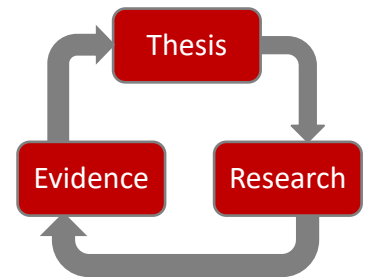
Based on your research and analysis, what is the answer to your question? Hint: This is your working thesis!

*Ex. Although the use of social media provides greater connectedness, it is actually proving detrimental to the development of face-to-face communication skills, leading to increased social isolation.*

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## Next Steps – Revising your thesis

*Think of your thesis as an evolving thesis: as you conduct research for your essay, new evidence will complicate and refine your ideas, and your thesis will need to change to reflect your more sophisticated understanding of the topic in response. Your revised thesis will then direct additional research, which will lead to further revision. This is the revision cycle: tweaking what you have is much easier than starting from scratch!*



## Does the thesis address all the points of your paper?

The thesis acts as a signpost for your reader: it should touch on all your major paragraph topics. Hint: list the main points of your paper and check if they are included, or at least implied, in your thesis!

## Are any parts of your thesis NOT addressed in your paper?

Your essay should examine all the major points indicated in your thesis. Look over your list of main points and check if you missed anything from your thesis. Hint: Filling in the gaps is a good way to expand your paper and reach that page requirement!

## Is any of the language in your thesis too vague/general?

Examine every word in your thesis and ask yourself if it could be more specific. The more specific your thesis, the more focused your paper and analysis will be.