

WRITING GUIDE

Thesis Statements for Research Essays and Literary Analyses

A thesis statement is a concise 1–3 sentence summary of the main arguments/points of your essay.

General

Example: This text (1.) critiques loyalty (2.) by rewarding disloyal characters and punishing loyal ones (3.) to display this text's discouragement of loyalty.

Does your thesis explain your what, how, and why?

1. Arguable claim → Your what
2. Line of reasoning → Your how
3. Significance of paper → Your why

Research Essay

Example: (1.) School uniforms (2.) are damaging to students, as they (3.) limit individuality and tarnish free gender and cultural expression.

Start by thinking of your research question, then use your thesis to answer/address that question:

1. Establish research topic
2. Claim about topic
3. Reason(s) for Claim

Literary Analysis Essay

Example: This text (1.) promotes patriarchal thinking (2.) using diction that degrades women and valorizes men, metaphors that liken women to animals, and an appeal to Aristotelian philosophy. (3.) The text thus functions as a piece of propaganda that justified the mistreatment of women.

1. Start by landing on an idea/concept that the text is persuading you to believe.
2. Next, ask yourself what specific details in the text led you to land on the idea/concept you identified.
3. Lastly, address the significance of the first two points. A good way to think about this is to consider the broader scope and effect of points (1) and (2).