



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY

# The Writing Center

## Thesis Statements

Developed by: Joy Patterson



# What Is A Thesis Statement?

- It narrows you subject to a single, central idea that you want readers to gain from your essay.
- It names the topic and asserts something specific and significant about it.
- It conveys your reason for writing, your purpose.
- It often provides a concise preview of how you will arrange your ideas in the essay.

# Working Thesis

- Though you may not have a final thesis when you begin to write, you should establish a tentative working thesis early on in your writing process.
- The word working is important here because the working thesis may well change as you write. Even so, a working thesis focuses your thinking and research, and helps keep you on track.
- A working thesis should have two parts: a topic, which states the topic and a comment, which makes an important point about the topic.

# How To Write A Working Thesis

- Use questions to focus a broad topic
  - Ask questions that will break the big topic into smaller topics
- Consider other angles to expand a narrow topic
  - Too-narrow topics are rarer than topics that are too broad.
  - If you cannot seem to find enough information on your topic to construct an argument, your topic might be too narrow.

# Developing The Thesis Statement

At the drafting stage, try to develop your working thesis into an explicit statement, which might take the following form:

In this paper/essay/research project, I plan to explain/argue/analyze/ demonstrate and so on that \_\_\_\_\_ because/if\_\_\_\_\_.

# Common Problems To Avoid

- Don't write a highly opinionated statement
  - Ex: With characteristic clumsiness, campus officials bumbled their way through the recent budget crisis.
- Don't make an announcement
  - My essay will discuss whether a student pub should exist on campus.
- Don't make a factual statement
  - Many businesses pollute the environment.
- Don't make a broad statement
  - Nowadays, high school education is often meaningless.

# Sample Thesis Statements

## **Subject**

- Federal aid to college students

## **Thesis statement**

- To compete well in the global economy, the United States must make higher education affordable for any student who qualifies academically.

## **Subject**

- Preventing juvenile crime

## **Thesis Statement**

- Juveniles can be diverted from crime by active learning programs, full-time sports, and intervention by mentors and role models.

# Checklist for Revising Thesis Statements

- Does the statement make a concise assertion about your topic?
- Is the assertion limited to only one idea?
- Is the assertion specific and significant?
- Does the statement at least imply your purpose?’
- Is the statement unified so that the parts relate to each other?
- Is the thesis statement one single sentence?



# The Writing Center Contact Info

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Prairie View A&M Writing Center  
Hilliard Hall, Room 118

<http://www.pvamu.edu/pages/4399.asp>

(936)261-3724

WritingCenter@pvamu.edu

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