



## How to Write a Strong and Effective Thesis Statement

### What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement captures the essential argument of an essay. It usually appears as the last sentence of an essay's introduction and serves as a well-considered articulation of the writer's central argument. Even though a thesis statement is an expression of an opinion, it is expressed and supported with logic and reasoning. A strong thesis statement should be concise, focused, and supportable. It is the ultimate formula of writing!

### The magic formula:

- (A) **What do you think?** What is your primary argument (opinion)?  
(B) **Why do you think it?** What are some reasons that support your argument?  
(C) **How is it true?** How can your reasons be proven? What evidence can you use to support them?

**Thesis = Due to (summary of B + C), A is true.**

### A strong thesis is NOT:

**1. A fact**

Example: Many students study abroad.

Why is it not strong? Fact-based statements can be recognized easily by asking whether anyone could reasonably disagree with the thesis. If everyone could agree that the statement is true, then the statement is a fact, not an argument.

**2. An observation**

Example: Canada promotes multiculturalism.

Why is it not strong? This may be true, but this statement is simply an observation about Canada; it does not express an *opinion* about how or why multiculturalism is promoted in Canada and / or its effects.

**3. A broad generalization**

Example: A healthy diet is good for people.

Why is it not strong? Sometimes, students love using broad terms as it seems to allow for more possibilities within an essay. However, making such broad claims only produces a shallow argument. In this example, "good" and "people" are too general of terms (good in what sense? Who are the people?) and "healthy diet" is too broad of a concept. Instead, "a diet lower in complex carbohydrates" or "children" are more specific categories which allow for a more focused and compelling thesis.

**4. A list of examples**

Example: The fact that the internet never sleeps means that people find it easier to share emotional problems openly, counsellors are always available, and there are no geographic limitations for seeking psychological help.

Why is it not strong? While the items in the list may be points of evidence in body paragraphs, they do not need to be listed in the central argument. Instead, *the internet's universal accessibility has created stronger connections in the area of psychological counselling* is stronger as it allows for deeper investigation of the central topic and it shows the relationship between ideas.

**Top 5 Dos and Don'ts**

DO	DON'T
<p>Make a claim that can be defended or opposed.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Due to how Instagram promotes visual perfection, the application is causing a decrease in self-confidence amongst its teenage users.</p>	<p>Use an emotional, first-person voice.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> I think that Instagram is bad because it makes people's self confidence decrease since it promotes visual perfection.</p>
<p>Make a claim that passes the "so what?" test</p> <p><b>Example:</b> International students are highly employable due to their demonstration of linguistic and cultural adaptability.</p>	<p>Make an announcement.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> I am going to talk about why international students are employable.</p>
<p>Answer the question.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> <i>Question: How is the abolition of the death penalty a human rights issue?</i></p> <p>Abolition of the death penalty is a human rights issue as it violates the human right to life and the right to live free from torture or cruel punishment.</p>	<p>Use qualifiers (might, maybe, perhaps, probably, kind of, really, most, I think, etc.)</p> <p><b>Example:</b> I think the abolition of the death penalty might actually be a human rights issue because it probably violates the human right to life and kind of violates the right to live free from torture or cruel punishment.</p>
<p>Be clear and specific.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> North American millennials have adopted communication technology into their lives and have thus created a more connected community.</p>	<p>Use language that is too general.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Youngsters prefer using technology because it is better for communication.</p>
<p>Make a claim that can be supported with evidence.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Obesity in North America is perpetuated by the increasing cost of healthy food and the capitalization of luxury health foods.</p>	<p>Simply state the obvious.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Eating fruit and vegetables is good for people.</p>

**Thesis Checklist**

- Someone can either agree or disagree with my thesis statement.
- My thesis answers the assignment question clearly.
- My thesis passes the "So what?" test.
- My thesis is concise, clear, and supportable.
- My thesis does not use vague, first-person language.