



WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT

Revised March 2007

The purpose of a thesis statement is to indicate what you intend to argue or prove in your essay or research paper.

The following is a list of properties of a good thesis statement:

It...

- is usually one sentence (may be two in rare situations).
- avoids clichés, vague generalities, metaphors.
- uses clear concise language.
- states an idea rather than simply a purpose.
- is comprehensive enough to represent the complexity of the idea that governs the development of the whole paper.
- tells the reader what structure the essay's paragraphs will take.
- is a complex rather than a simple or compound structure of clauses.
- states an idea, not merely a fact or a description.
- expresses an evaluation, thoughtful commitment, reasoned judgment, or ventured argument of the writer.
- gives some indication within the sentence of the reasons for the assertion it makes.
- usually works best as the final sentence of the opening paragraph, as the culmination of the introduction.
- is usually better in the form of a declarative sentence rather than a question, particularly if the question does nothing to indicate a resolution.