

Thesis Models

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The purpose of a thesis statement is to summarize the main idea of the paper and inform readers what to expect when reading. Even though all thesis statements have these goals in common, they do not take on a single form or follow a simple formula. This is because the construction of a thesis statement largely depends on the purpose of the paper. Before writing a thesis statement, students should think carefully about what the assignment is asking them to do, what their agenda is for writing their paper, or what kind of essay they will be writing.

Analytic essays and thesis statements

When students are asked to analyze something, they are being asked to think about and explain what something means, how or why something is effective or not, or what purpose something serves. Analysis requires a person to fully understand a concept by breaking it down into parts and then evaluating how the parts work either separately or as a part of a system. In an analytic essay, writers provide their interpretation or make a claim about what their analysis illustrates. Therefore, an analytic thesis statement should clearly state what the author will be analyzing and the conclusion of this analysis.

For example, if an assignment asks students to analyze how a specific image or ad campaign reflects the goals of a company or organization, a thesis statement for this essay should include the name of the advertiser and a statement about how one or more details from the images reflect the specific goals of the organization. One such thesis statement might sound like: “Using the image of a human body in place of an animal body in several provocative situations, PETA forces viewers to associate animals with humans in order to communicate their message that animals should be treated as equal to humans and should therefore not be eaten.” This thesis statement clearly states the thing that is being analyzed—an image used in several PETA advertisements—and what the author concluded about this image through his or her analysis—that PETA uses this image to communicate their stance that animals and people should be treated equally. Readers then know what to expect when reading the essay.

Expository essays and thesis statements

Expository essays describe or explain something like a concept, process, place, person, or event without positing an argument or making a judgment about the topic. In this kind of essay, the writer’s purpose might be to present new information, add to an existing conversation, or clarify what other writers have said. When constructing an expository thesis statement, writers should begin by identifying the topic they are discussing, what they will be explaining, and why this conversation is important to readers. This will help the author decide what information needs to be included in the essay and will help the author construct an appropriate thesis statement.

An expository thesis statement should clearly state the goal of the paper by relaying the topic and what the author will be explaining. For example, an essay that explains Florida’s new texting and driving laws might include a thesis statement that says, “Florida’s lawmakers seek to enforce a strict no texting while driving policy by tacking on additional fines when traffic violations occur while driving.” This thesis statement tells readers that the essay is going to explain more about how this new law works. While an expository thesis simply provides the factual explanation of the laws, an analytical essay might methodically

examine the Constitutionality of the laws.

Argumentative essays and thesis statements

An argumentative or persuasive essay takes a position on an issue or asserts a claim and then uses various rhetorical strategies to support that position or claim. Usually, the purpose of an argumentative paper is to persuade readers to agree with the writer's point of view. An argumentative thesis statement, then, clearly states the author's position or argument and when possible, includes a brief list of the major supporting points. For example, a sample argumentative thesis statement might say, "Pharmaceutical companies should not use animals to test medications because these tests do not provide accurate enough results to outweigh the economic and ethical costs that come with animal testing." This thesis statement clearly establishes the author's position on the topic of animal testing that they will argue in the rest of their paper.

Proposal argument essays and thesis statements

Sometimes arguments come in the form of proposing a solution to a problem. In a proposal argument essay, writers address an issue and suggest a possible way to fix it. Proposal argument essays work to convince readers that the proposed solution is effective and realistic. There are two types of proposal arguments: A *practical* proposal argument seeks to solve a more local or simple problem with a tangible solution. For example, if a certain school is having a problem with weapon-related violence, a practical solution might be to install metal detectors at all access points and increase police presence. This is a practical proposal because there is a very clear cause-effect relationship between the action and its effect and because the resources needed to enact this solution are measurable in terms of cost and supplies.

A *policy* proposal argument, however, works to solve more large-scale issues that might require changes to policies, procedures, or ideologies. Solutions to these kinds of issues may not have a simple, clear, or measurable effect on the problem, and it may not be possible to accurately measure the resources necessary for enacting the solution. These kinds of arguments are thus more complex. For example, there isn't a simple solution to decreasing the unemployment rate in the United States. Many people think that the simple solution is to increase the number of available jobs, but there may be additional barriers such as the kinds of jobs we need to add and the qualifications of those people who are unemployed. The solution may be to add more jobs, but a policy proposal also suggests a method for enacting this solution.

Whether writing a practical or policy proposal, authors should construct thesis statements that clearly communicate the issue at hand and the author's solution. For example, one such thesis statement might be: "In order to protect patients' rights and ensure ethical treatment, donors should be able to track these samples as they are used for research and should be compensated if these samples are used for monetary gain." This thesis statement clearly alerts readers to the issue at hand and briefly lays out the author's proposed solution.

Clearly, each type of thesis statement serves a distinct purpose. It helps indicate to readers whether the work is explaining a place, event, or theory; analyzing a system or concept; or trying to persuade the audience to feel a certain way about an issue. Writers need to construct their thesis statements according to their purpose so that readers can clearly identify the writer's goal and follow their thoughts throughout the essay. Thus, an experienced writer will carefully assess their purpose for writing before composing a work.