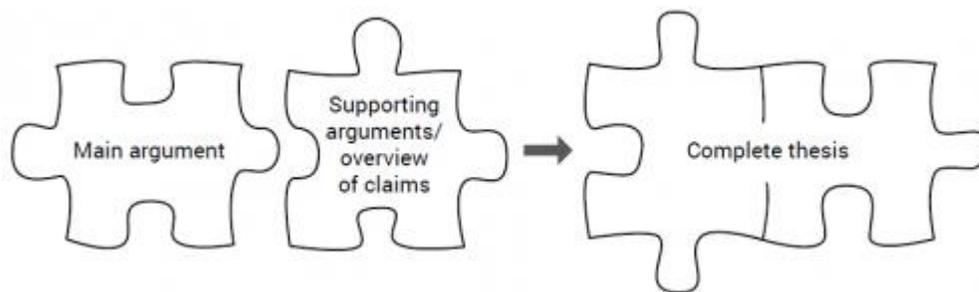


# Thesis statements

A thesis statement articulates a writer's main argument, point, or message in a piece of writing. Strong thesis statements will tell your audience what your **topic** is and what your **position** on that topic is. Also, they will often provide an overview of key **supporting arguments** that you will explore throughout your paper. A well-written thesis statement demonstrates that you have explored the topic thoroughly and can defend your claims.

For short, undergraduate-level papers, a thesis statement will usually be **one to three sentences** in length, often occurring at the end of the first paragraph. Its main function is to tie all of your ideas and arguments together. As you continue to present your evidence and argue your stance, your thesis will run throughout your essay like a thread.



In the following example, the first sentence represents the statement of topic and main argument, while the second sentence provides further details about the topic that gives the reader a sense of how the paper will be structured:

*e.g., Closing the border between Greece and Macedonia has led to unnecessary suffering among refugees by preventing humanitarian aid from getting to those camps that need it most [first sentence]. Resolving this human rights problem will ultimately require cooperative effort from local, regional, and international agencies [second sentence].*

## Building effective thesis statements

A strong thesis statement should be clear, concise, focused, and supportable. Unless your essay is simply explanatory, it should also be **debatable** (i.e., if your position on a topic is one that almost nobody would dispute, it may not be the best choice for an argumentative paper). The following steps will help you throughout the process of developing your thesis statement:

1. **Read** the assignment thoroughly. Make sure you are clear about the expectations.
2. Do preliminary, **general research**: collect and organize information about your topic.
3. Form a **tentative thesis**. The following questions may help you focus your research into a tentative thesis:
  - a. What's **new** about this topic?
  - b. What **important** about this topic?

- c. What’s **interesting** about this topic?
  - d. What have others **missed** in their discussions about this topic?
  - e. What about this topic is **worth** writing about?
4. Do additional research. Once you have narrowed your focus, you can perform **targeted research**
  5. Refine your thesis statement. After doing extensive research and evaluating many sources, **rewrite your thesis** so it expresses your angle or position on your topic more clearly.

### Sample thesis statements

| <i>Type of Thesis Statement</i> | <i>Example</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Claims about fact               | Today, climate change is the most significant challenge to capitalism; in order to understand how capitalism may evolve as a result of climate change, each of these phenomena must first be understood individually.                                                           |
| Claims about cause and effect   | Because they are less prepared financially and logistically, developing nations will face the most devastating effects of climate change.                                                                                                                                       |
| Claims about solutions          | Strategies to increase reliance on natural gas are not effective against climate change. Instead, policymakers should focus on geothermal heating for homes and electric vehicle development.                                                                                   |
| Claims about value              | Equity demands that developed nations find a way of tackling climate change that does not undermine growth and poverty reduction in developing nations. Doing so will offer more possibilities for long-term stability in regions likely to be most affected by climate change. |

**General Tip:** This guide offers some essential tips on thesis statements, but it’s important to note that thesis statement content, structure, and placement can vary widely depending on the discipline, level, and genre. One good way to get a sense of how thesis statements might be constructed in your field is to read some related scholarly articles.