

# How to Create a Strong Thesis Statement

Many writing assignments ask you to create a thesis-driven argument. Your thesis statement should explicitly lay out the specific argument you will support in the body of your paper.

## 1. A strong thesis statement takes some sort of stand.

Remember that your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject. For example, if you are writing a paper for a class on fitness, you might be asked to choose a popular weight-loss product to evaluate. Here are two thesis statements:

*There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.*

This is a weak thesis statement. First, it fails to take a stand. Second, the phrase *negative and positive aspects* is vague.

*Because Banana Herb Tea Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.*

This is a stronger thesis because it takes a stand, and because it's specific.

## 2. A strong thesis statement justifies discussion.

Your thesis should indicate the point of the discussion. If your assignment is to write a paper on kinship systems, using your own family as an example, you might come up with either of these two thesis statements:

*My family is an extended family.*

This is a weak thesis because it merely states an observation. Your reader won't be able to tell the point of the statement, and will probably stop reading.

*While most American families would view consanguineal marriage, or marriage between people from a common ancestor, as a threat to the nuclear family structure, many Iranian families, like my own, believe that these marriages help reinforce kinship ties in an extended family.*

This is a stronger thesis because it shows how your experience contradicts a widely-accepted view. A good strategy for creating a strong thesis is to show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.

### 3. A strong thesis statement is specific.

A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about, and will help you keep your paper to a manageable topic. For example, if you're writing a seven-to-ten page paper on hunger, you might say:

*World hunger has many causes and effects.*

This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, *world hunger* can't be discussed thoroughly in seven to ten pages. Second, *many causes and effects* is vague. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects. A revised thesis might look like this:

*Hunger persists in Glandelinia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.*

This is a stronger thesis statement because it narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic, and it also identifies the specific causes for the existence of hunger.

### 4. A strong thesis answers a HOW or WHY question about your topic through specific language.

Here is a broad formula to think of the components of a weak thesis statement compared to a stronger thesis statement.

| <b>Broad Noun</b>                                     | + | <b>Weak Verb</b>   | + | <b>Vague, Evaluative Adjective</b>                              |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| The economic situation                                |   | is   |   | bad.  |
| <b>Specific Noun</b>                                  | + | <b>Action Verb</b>   | + | <b>Assertive Predicate</b>                                      |
| The <b>tax policies</b> of the current administration |   | <b>threaten to reduce</b> the tax burden on the middle class |   | by sacrificing education and health-care programs for everyone. |