

Thesis Statements

Steps to Form a Thesis

1. Define your purpose and audience.
2. Identify the research activities. Which information will you need to convince your audience?
3. Formulate questions your research will explore. Create 3-4 questions most important to your audience that you will address in your paper.
4. After doing some initial research, turn your questions into a potential position statement that suggests the meaning, relevance, or importance of the evidence for your audience. What do you want your audience to do or believe after reading your paper and why?
5. Test the thesis. Does it:
 - Make a specific and narrowly focused claim?
 - Take an arguable position?
 - Go beyond opinion and is supported by credible evidence?
 - Offer new insights?

A “Thesis Maker” you can try:

Although _____,
(general statement, idea, or opinion opposite to the one you will argue)

nevertheless, _____,
(thesis—what you want your audience to do or believe) (Specific Noun + Active Verb + Specific Modifier)

because _____.
(the position or points you will support in your paper by using PIE, or point, information, explanation)

One Way to Organize Paragraphs or Paper Sections: PIE

P = the writer’s Point. *The student’s voice.* Try to make the point in one sentence.

I = Information/evidence from relevant reliable sources to discuss the point. *Other voices.* Student writers should provide sufficient evidence including scholarly and substantial written sources (secondary research), plus the student’s own interviews and field observations (primary research). Evidence should be accurate, and brief quotations, summaries, paraphrases of sources, and evidence should be cited accurately.

E = Explanation, Elaboration, Evaluation, and analysis of the information provided in the body paragraph. *The student’s voice.* The student writer makes meaning by exploring the information/evidence he/she just cited. The student writer repeatedly asks, “So what?” and then responds to this question on paper in order to explain to the reader why the evidence is important in supporting the writer’s point. Experienced writers do not assume that the meaning of their source material or their reason for including it is self-evident. Instead, experienced writers explain to their readers what the quotation, paraphrase, or summary of the source means.