

THESIS STATEMENTS

PowerPoint created by:

Karen Hornberger

Library Media Specialist

Palisades High School

Types of Thesis Statements

From Purdue OWL (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>)

Tip 1. Determine what kind of paper you are writing:

- An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.
- An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
- An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

If you are writing a text which does not fall under these three categories (ex. a narrative), a thesis statement somewhere in the first paragraph could still be helpful to your reader.

Tip 2. Your thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should be supported with specific evidence.

Tip 3. The thesis statement usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.

Tip 4. Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.

Construction of a Thesis Statement

1. The enumerative thesis (a.k.a. “three-point” thesis) lists the evidence that supports your primary argument. Each body paragraph discusses one piece of evidence.

Example: The writers of Family Guy use irreverent humor to satirize pop culture, comment on the stereotypical American family, and explore controversial themes.

2. The umbrella thesis encompasses the entire argument in a concise statement without naming each piece of evidence that the author plans to use.

Example: The irreverent humor used in Family Guy is not used simply to shock, but to comment on deeper societal issues.

From:

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:S73Tr26QprYJ:www.mtsu.edu/uwc/Handouts/WTG/WTG_7a.doc+&hl=en&gl=us&p_id=bl&srcid=ADGEEShViyqc6iFEi7dM6ixrcMUDfVvrXqys0ktsCfrCDSVcfTFxEiFgpOusNlz52BBoy31SDhaOruOAagjW7e-cnGOfQlazDwlkkmILM9TNLo_7tdrLBt6FE0LhUlylGbbybchxa5U2&sig=AHIEtbSCelHjw68vBH0fVvrc6MSXFbLvQg

Construction of a Thesis Statement

Additional example of enumerative and umbrella:

Enumerative:

Stalin was one of the most ruthless leaders in history; he created a Totalitarian state in Russia through collecting agriculture, promoting and supporting extreme nationalism, and severely punishing anyone who stood in the way of his policies.

Umbrella:

Joseph Stalin's terror-ridden regime was a Totalitarian dictatorship in which he stopped at nothing to attain his goals of rapid industrialization and complete government control of the Russian citizens.

Umbrella Analogy

Many writers think of a thesis statement as an umbrella:

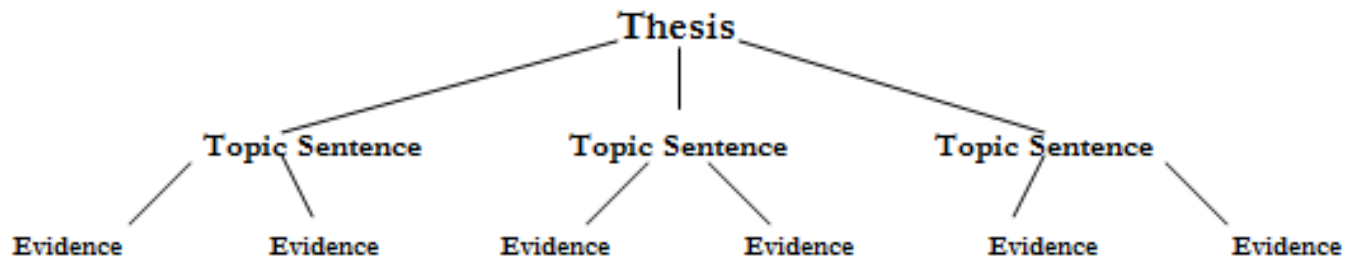
Everything that you carry along in your essay has to fit under this umbrella, and if you try to take on packages that don't fit, you will either have to get a bigger umbrella or something's going to get wet.

From: <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/thesis.htm>

Family Tree Analogy

The “Family Tree” Analogy³

The thesis statement can be thought of as the paper’s parents that give birth to the topic sentences. In turn, the topic sentences give birth to the evidence that supports the point(s).



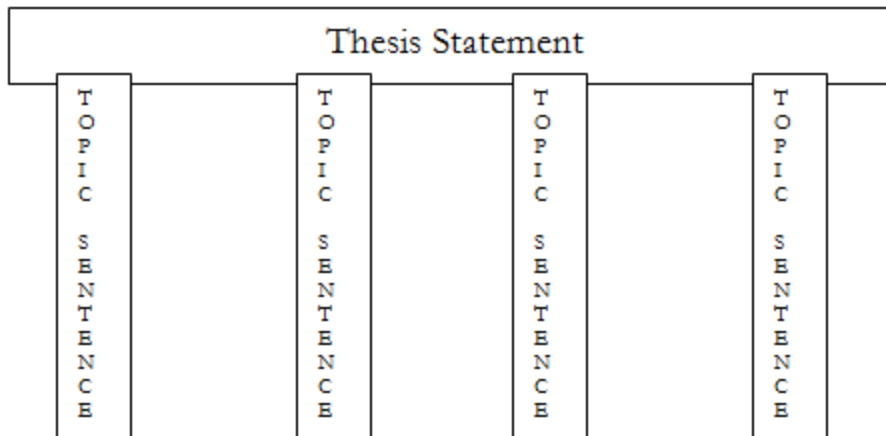
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The Roof and Pillar Analogy

The “Roof and Pillar” Analogy⁴

1. The thesis statement covers the entire argument/the primary point of the paper.



2. The topic sentences give the main point(s) of individual body paragraphs and, in turn, support a part of the argument/primary point of the thesis.

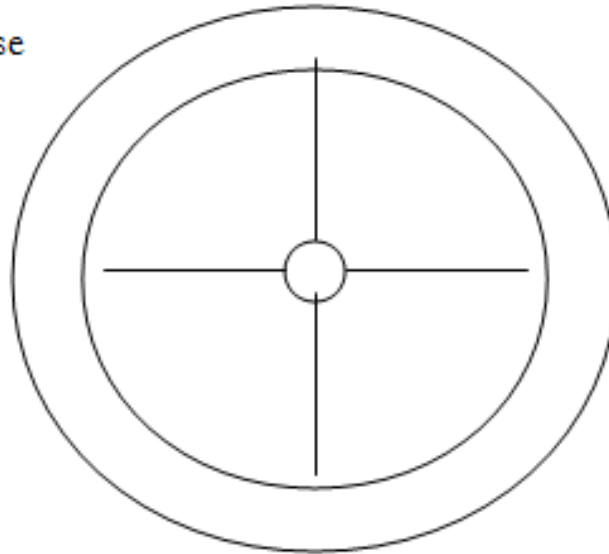
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The Writing Wheel Analogy

The “Writing Wheel” Analogy⁵

1. The inner core is a word or phrase that best represents the essence of what the writer is trying to say.
2. The spokes are the evidence.
3. The outer rim is the thesis statement, which encapsulates all of the inner evidence.



From:

[http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDMQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.savannahstate.edu%2Fclass%2Frewrite%2Ftutorials%2F\(45\)%2520Thesis%2520Statement%2520and%2520Topic%2520Sentences%255B1%255D.doc&ei=SmyqUITADLO80QGL84BY&usg=AFQjCNFvB52DHELsYUSic_o9zd6BrFvPmA](http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDMQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fweb.savannahstate.edu%2Fclass%2Frewrite%2Ftutorials%2F(45)%2520Thesis%2520Statement%2520and%2520Topic%2520Sentences%255B1%255D.doc&ei=SmyqUITADLO80QGL84BY&usg=AFQjCNFvB52DHELsYUSic_o9zd6BrFvPmA)

Solar System Analogy

The Solar System Analogy

Just as the sun is the center of the solar system and orbited by the planets, topic sentences revolve around your thesis statement, the center of your argument.



Having trouble starting?

...here are ideas to get you going!

Step 1:

Write down everything that interests you about your topic.

Why? This is to help you determine what is most exciting to you. When an author is more passionate about what they write, it is likely a more interesting paper will be the result.

Looking for something interesting? There may be controversy about the topic or there may be current events associated with the topic.

Having trouble starting?

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Step 2:

Consider what you want to keep and what you want to eliminate.

Why? Determining which facts you will pay attention to will help you focus on your content and ignore unrelated items. While researching, you will be less likely to be overwhelmed if you know what you are choosing to ignore.

Example: You may choose to focus on the psychology of abuse and eliminate the physical aspect of abuse.

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Step 3:

Draft a thesis and convert informal words for formal words.

Why? This is a formal paper and formal words are more appropriate.

Example:

Not so hot:

America has a problem with too many overweight children.

Much better:

Childhood obesity in the United States is a serious concern.

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Step 4:

Check your formal words.

Why?

1. You want to ensure that they are spelled correctly.
2. The words that you selected may not be the most commonly used keywords and you want to get an idea of which keywords are most commonly used.

Tip:

Make sure that you use these words consistently throughout the paper.

Other tips

Make sure your thesis allows you to locate plenty of research on your topic.

Make sure you have a hook that makes your reader want to read further!

Your thesis may evolve as you research and write. It is acceptable to revise your thesis if you need to.