**Thesis Statements: An Introduction**

**Thesis**

A thesis statement is the basic stand that an author takes, the opinion that he expresses, and the major point that he wishes to make about his subject. It contains the controlling idea of the essay, and therefore, gives the direction and the unity to all the separate elements of the writing. The purpose of the essay is to convince the reader that the thesis is indeed a valid one. **The thesis should be one sentence – clear, specific and arguable.**

1. The first step in writing an effective thesis statement involves the focusing, limiting, or narrowing of the topic. The scope of the thesis will depend on length, purpose, audience, occasion, and knowledge
2. Each thesis will (a) state the subject clearly and specifically so that it can be broken into parts; (b) take a stand or attitude about the subject; and (c) provide the direction by indicating, implicitly or explicitly, the order in which the essay will develop the points.
3. The controlling idea in the thesis is a word, phrase, or clause that states the opinion, attitude, or stand that the writer takes about the subject; it provides the angle from which the writer wishes to approach his subject.

**The thesis is always a single declarative statement.**

**HOW TO DEVELOP A THESIS STATEMENT**

Think deeper!  After writing a thesis statement, ask yourself, “So what?”

**Example**: *Family Guy* is a humorous television show. (So what?)

**Revision**:  *Family Guy*is entertaining because of its controversial humor. (So what?)

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

**Some ways to expand your thesis**

**Say why**:  For many student writers, procrastination is based on fear; this fear keeps students from improving their writing because they do not take the time to fully develop their ideas.

**Say why your audience should care:**Students should understand that worrying about grammar and spelling too early in the writing process will actually lead to a poor essay.

**Say how:**English teachers often overwhelm students by giving them too many tasks to think about when writing essays.

**Make specific comparisons:**The key difference between writing in high school and writing in college is that your ideas become more significant and complex; therefore, college freshman have to learn to think critically.

**Make an evaluation:**My high school teacher’s insistence on teaching me the five-paragraph essay has actually hurt my writing skills.

**Consider the consequences:**If students do not find ways to think deeper and more critically, they will never learn to fully develop their ideas.

**TOPIC SENTENCES**

Just as the thesis statement tells the main argument of your essay, **topic sentences** state the main idea of individual body paragraphs and directly relate to your thesis.  Topic sentences provide support for your argument and direction for your reader. Cover the topics in your paper in the same order in which you arrange them in your thesis statement.

**The Roof and Pillar Analogy**

The thesis statement covers the overall argument/primary point of the paper and is supported by the topic sentences, which give the main points and evidence of the paper.

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