

# Thesis Statements

# What is a thesis statement?

- It is the main idea of an essay.
- It is the controlling idea for an informational essay or the claim (point you want to argue) in an argumentative essay.
- A thesis statement is usually one sentence in the introductory paragraph of an essay.

## SO

- The thesis statement explains to a reader the position you intend to prove or the topic you intend to explain.

# Thesis statements **avoid** the following:

- DO NOT USE the first person (I believe, In my opinion, etc.)
- AVOID unclear language (It seems, etc.)
- DO NOT attempt two topics at once (even if they seem related). Pick one and stick with it.
- AVOID just stating a fact - A thesis is something you plan to support with evidence.

A thesis statement should not be too broad.

Too Broad



The world is a magnificent place to live.

Better

Good teachers and involved parents make Mountain City Elementary a fantastic school.

Which sentence is too broad to be a good thesis statement?

A. Mountain City is a great place to live because of high-ranking schools and access to many wonderful places to fish.

B. Mountain City is a great place to live. (This thesis is too broad.)

A thesis statement should not be too general.

Too general 

Mountain City Elementary is a good school.

Better

Daily writing practice and effective models have led to improved writing skills for the students at Mountain City Elementary.

Which sentence is too general to be a good thesis statement?

A. Music makes people happy. (Too general)

B. Music therapy is useful in relieving stress and helping students focus.

A thesis statement should not be  
a title.

A title



Cost of Living

Better

The cost of living in Mountain City is lower  
than in most other cities in the United  
States.

Which sentence would not be a good thesis statement because it is a title?

A. Good teaching and parent involvement have led to an increase in TCAP scores at Mountain City Elementary.

B. Rising TCAP Scores at Mountain City Elementary

(Title -- don't use)

More Practice

Directions: In each of the following slides tell whether the sentence is a good or bad thesis statement and why. (For example: 2. Bad, uses personal pronoun.)

1. Although most people believe otherwise, bats are harmless and highly beneficial.
2. In this essay I will discuss the crime rate in Mountain City.
3. Energetic exercise is a good way to help relieve stress and stay fit.
4. Mountain City and Boone differ in many ways.

# Good or Bad

5. This paper will consider the advantages and disadvantages of students having nightly homework.
6. Hate speech should be eliminated for many reasons.
7. Many people do not like to watch violent horror movies.
8. Today's movies do not have the emotional impact of the classic horror movies of the 1940's.

# Good or Bad

9. Rap music is the best music ever.
10. Although many people find rap music offensive, it often has a positive message and impact on today's youth.
11. I enjoy whitewater rafting.
12. The first whitewater rafting trip can challenge a person both in body and spirit.
13. Sixth-grade students are busy.

# Good or Bad

14. The life of a typical sixth-grade student is challenging due to multiple teachers and the need to succeed in extracurricular activities.
15. Community service projects include building shelters for the homeless, serving meals to the hungry, providing transportation for the sick, distributing clothes, and a large number of other helpful activities.
16. Many students serve their community because it's required or to help those who are less fortunate.