

How to Write a Good Thesis Statement

The thesis is truly the heart and soul of any research paper. It states what the paper is about and gives the reader an idea of what information will follow.

Think of it as the topic sentence for your entire paper.

The thesis is an idea, opinion, or conclusion about your topic, is proven by your research, and is the last sentence of your introduction.

A good thesis **IS**:

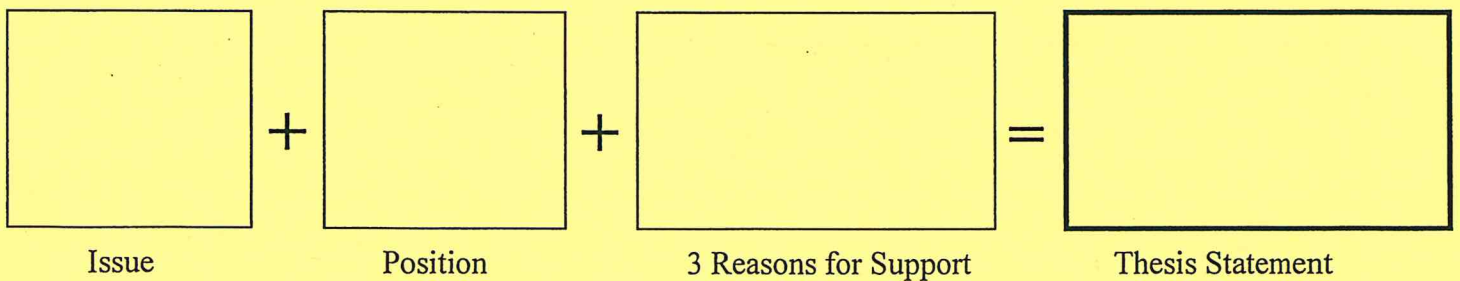
- a statement made in one well-developed sentence
- clear and to the point
- based on information you find in your reading and prove with your research
- specific and focuses on information that can be explored in a 2-3 page paper

A good thesis is **NOT**:

- a question (Did you know that Global Warming is a real problem?)
- an "I" statement (I learned that Global Warming is a problem in our world that must be addressed.)
- vague and wandering (Global Warming is a threat to everyone.)
- overly obvious (Global Warming has been in the news a lot lately.)
- overly general (Global Warming exists in our world.)
- emotional (Global Warming must be stopped or we will all die!)

What does a good thesis look like for the research paper?

Since you will be writing about an issue and taking a side/position (supported by details from your research, of course) on that particular issue, you can use the following graphic to help you plan and organize your thesis statement:



Let's try an example:

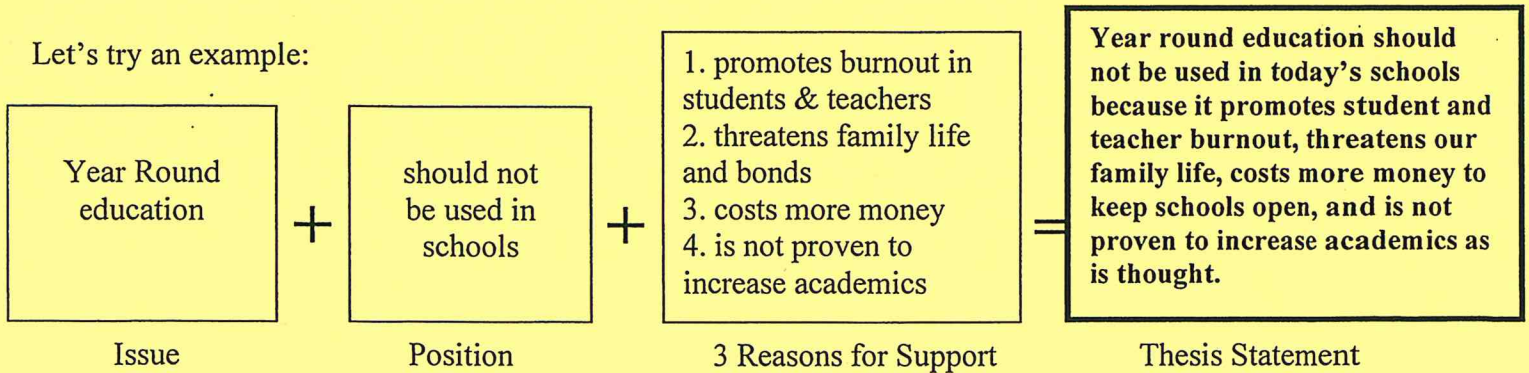
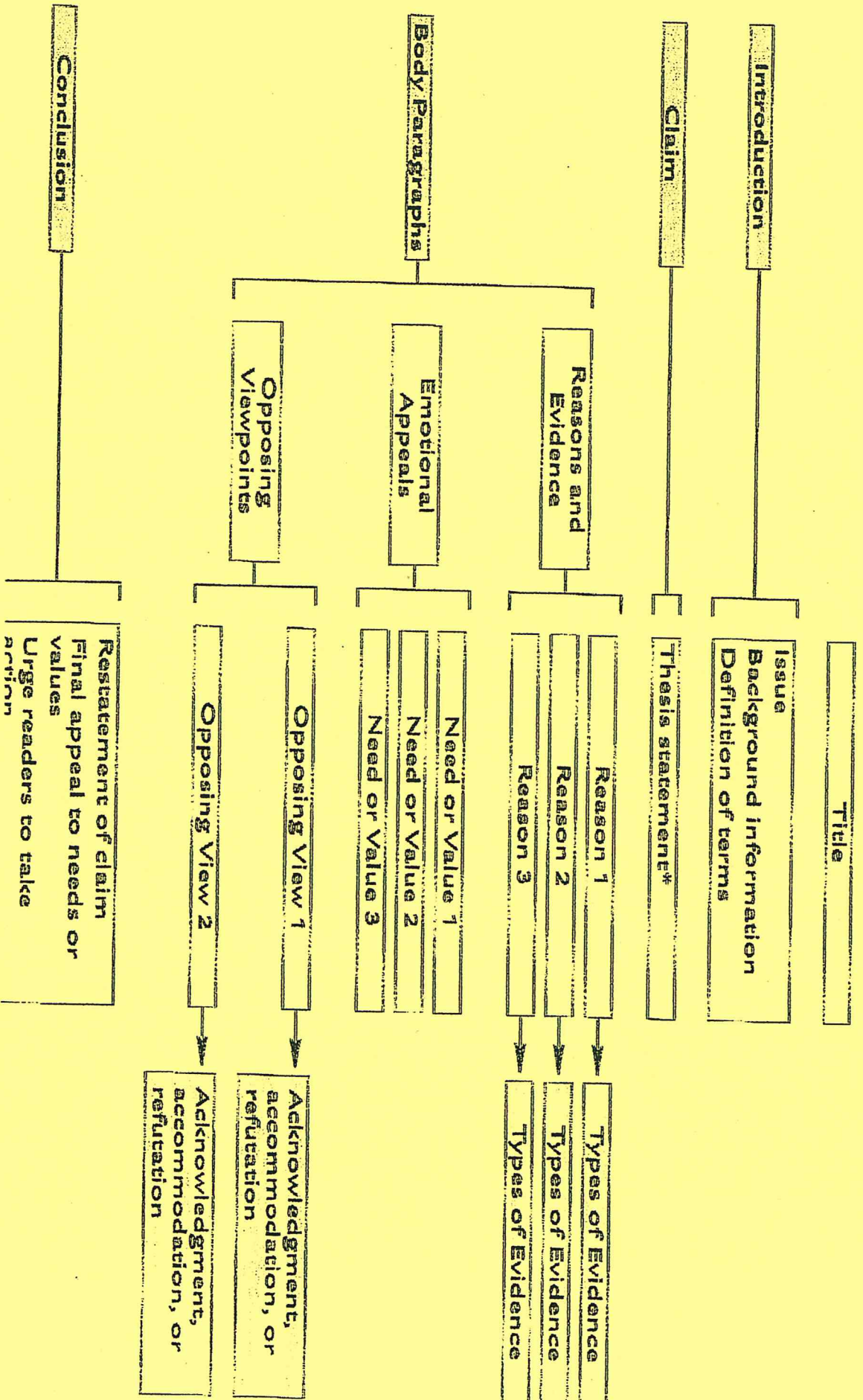


FIGURE 17.1
 GRAPHIC ORGANIZER FOR AN ARGUMENT ESSAY



Thesis Statement Design

- TOPIC
 - CLAIM (verb) a sense of safety in the student
 - DIRECTION (__, __, and __) body by discouraging concealer
 - UNIVERSAL IDEA (abstract noun) of prohibited items, school pride and facilitating feelings of equality.
-
- QUALIFIER (subordinating conjunction)

Power Paragraph Structure

Sentence 1: Assertion (what you see/think is going on based on your evaluation of the reading - see comment above on what constitutes "evaluation")

Sentence 2: Evidence (usually drawn from the text and represented by an "embedded quote" that fits into a sentence of your creation.... not just a quoted sentence from the text)

Sentence 3: Commentary (elaborates on/explains/extends the Evidence just given)

Sentence 4: Commentary (ties the Evidence just given back to the Assertion)

Sentence 5: Evidence (2nd piece of evidence drawn from the text)

Sentence 6: Commentary (again, extends/elaborates/explains Evidence)

Sentence 7: Commentary (again, ties the second piece of Evidence back to the Assertion)

Ms. Walz

Writing Power Paragraphs

Thesis Statement (use this as your introduction): Topic/Claim/Directions.

Ex: *To display the value of individualism, Hawthorne sets Hester apart from her community, demonizes Chillingworth for pursuing Puritanical justice, and gives Dimmesdale solace only after he is willing to go against the expectations of his parish.*

Topic Sentence - Assertion: This opens your paragraph and makes the claim regarding the issue you set out to demonstrate to the reader/the point you want to make. USE A STRONG, ACTIVE VERB FOR YOUR CLAIM.

EX: *The novel reinforces Individualism as an essential aspect of a moral life by setting Hester apart from the rest of Boston and giving her the opportunity to evolve to her best self.*

CHUNK 1

Example: This sentence contains partial quotes that you use to give evidence from the text to support your claim.

EX: *Having "established herself" apart from the Puritan community frees Hester to exercise her "delicate and imaginative skill" that would otherwise be unacceptable to the "sable simplicity" that characterized much of Puritan culture.*

Elaboration - Commentary: This sentence is your first commentary and it places the example in a context, extends what it means.

The use of the term "established" rather than "moved" implies the creation of what would become an institutionalized part of their community and culture, providing an "imaginative" contrast to the otherwise "simple" values of Puritan society.

Commentary: This sentence is your second commentary on the same example – this is where you explain what you see as the connection between the quote and the larger point your making.

Placing Hester in such stark contrast to Puritan ideals, yet providing her with the sympathy of the narrator, communicates her Individualist status as a value to the reader.

CHUNK 2 – if possible include a section "chunk" of Example, Commentary 1, and Commentary 2 related to the same topic sentence/assertion.

Active Verbs

Note of Caution: Only use the verbs you're familiar with unless you take the time to examine the definition in the dictionary. **This is NOT a list of synonyms.** Each word has specific usage patterns that are unique to its meaning.

Literary Essay	Report or Persuasive Essay that refers to an expert's opinion or research studies	Report or Persuasive Essay that describes beginnings, causes, effects, etc.	Persuasive Essay that refers to the possibilities of what ideas can do, create, or assist with	Report or Persuasive Essay that involves laws or legal proposals
Alludes to Attests Clarifies Confirms Conveys Denotes Depicts Determines Displays Emphasizes Entails Establishes Exemplifies Explains Exposes Expounds Highlights Hints Illustrates Implies Connotes Indicates Portrays Represents Reveals Shows Signifies Substantiates Suggests Typifies Underscores	Analyzes Assumes Concludes Confirms Considers Construes Deduces Deliberates Demonstrates Examines Explores Identifies Imparts Indicates Maintains Manifests Misconstrues Observes Perceives Pinpoints Presumes Questions Reasons Refers Remarks Scrutinizes Speculates Substantiates Supports Supposes Theorizes Upholds Validates Verifies	Advances Affects Compels Discovers Empowers Forces Generates Ignites Impacts Imposes Incites Includes Influences Initiates Initiates Commences Instigates Introduces Involves Kindles Launches Leads to Presents Pressures Promotes Prompts Provokes Results in Sparks Stimulates Triggers Yields	Accomplishes Achieves Aids Alleviates Ameliorates Assembles Assists Attains Attempts Augments Builds Constructs Delivers Develops Discourages Emits Encourages Engenders Enhances Enriches Establishes Expands Facilitates Grants Improves Increases Manufactures Offers Produces Progresses Provides Reaches Supplies Transforms	Authorizes Allows Permits Sanctions Licenses Documents Consents Forbids Prohibits Disallows Endorses Bans Secures Guarantees Bars Outlaws Inhibits Hinders Prevents Precludes Thwarts Averts Defends Protects Safeguards Guards Neglects

WRITING EXCITING PARAGRAPHS

(Remember waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay back in 6th grade?)

TOPIC SENTENCE

Topic Sentence- The sentence within a paragraph that states the main thought and is often placed at the very beginning or end of the paragraph. The purpose of the topic sentence is to let the reader (audience) know what you are writing about and to introduce the main ideas.

When I was growing up, one of the places I enjoyed the most was the cherry tree in my back yard.

What is a bad topic sentence? Ask yourself these questions...

1. Does the topic sentence present one- and only one- topic?
2. Does the sentence give strong direction to the whole paragraph?
3. Does the sentence use words specific enough to be focused and clear?

If not, it is probably a bad topic sentence.

UNFOCUSED: Too many people treat animals badly in experiments. (What people? What is meant by badly? What kind of experiments?)

FOCUSED: The cosmetic industry often harms animals in unnecessary experiments designed to test their products.

THE DEVELOPMENT (BODY)

The Development/ Body- The sentences that support the topic sentence and provide details.

⊕ The length of a paragraph is dependent on the quality of the content, not on some arbitrary number (like "5 sentences".) A paragraph should be as long as it needs to be. ⊕

CONCLUDING SENTENCE

Concluding Sentence- The concluding sentence restates the topic sentence with new words at the end of the paragraph. The purpose of the concluding sentence is to wrap up the paragraph and bring all the ideas back together.

.....
Topic Sentence: The cosmetic industry often harms animals in unnecessary experiments designed to test their products.

Concluding Sentence: The cruelty to animals during experimentation is not worth the tradeoff of having better beauty products

.....
Topic Sentence: If I were stranded on a desert island, I would want my best friend, books, and water.

Concluding Sentence: Being stranded on a desert island would be a lot harder to bear without my best friend, books, and water.