

Biology Writing Resources – Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is most commonly a sentence that states the central idea or argument for an essay and situates the focus for an essay on a particular subject matter under discussion.

Tip: Your thesis statement should be specific.

Thesis Statements in Context

1: Analytical—An analytical essay breaks down ‘content’ into parts, investigating for example, the ‘what,’ ‘why,’ and ‘how’. The thesis statement should be direct and clear, both announcing the text/visual document and aspects that the writer will place emphasis on that warrant an analytical lens.

2: Expository—An expository essay is premised on an investigatory approach of an idea and the fruition of this idea in an argumentative manner. The thesis statement should be direct and clear, announcing intent, argument, and logical support.

3: Argumentative—An argumentative essay locates a topic (in an investigative manner), presents varying claims and establishes a position on a topic, and supports such claims/positions with specific evidence. The thesis statement should be direct and clear, announcing the topic of interest, position on said topic, and the exigency that motivated an appropriate response.

Tip: Determine what kind of essay you are writing. This will help in the constructing phase of a thesis statement.

Why a Thesis Statement?

1: A thesis statement narrows down the central idea that will be conveyed to an audience.

2: A thesis statement identifies and specifies a position/stance for the audience.

3: A thesis statement conveys a purpose for the audience, that is, a way to understand your subject matter.

4: A thesis statement can be like a road-map, it tells the audience what to expect from the essay.

Tips: Brainstorming is central to creating a thesis statement. Write a general statement as a thesis and consider this a ‘working thesis’. Throughout, consider the relationships between facts and evidence, and consider whether or not the ‘working thesis’ can be supported. Adjust accordingly, with more specificity.

Strengthening a Thesis Statement

1: Locating your thesis—writing an effect essay requires that the writer be knowledgeable of rhetorical strategies. One strategy is ‘placing’ the thesis statement, strategically, and considering the rhetorical effects of such placement.

2: How well does the thesis statement capture the subject matter—Remember, the purpose of a thesis statement is not to summarize, but rather to make an argument based on the subject matter that can be supported with evidence.

3: Is the thesis statement specific enough—Does the thesis statement situate a single idea, clarify the focus, and offer a position/stance based on an exigency (exigencies)?