The Thesis Statement

What is a thesis statement?

- Thesis literally means, “a statement to be proved.”
  - It is not self-evident. It needs “to be proved.” It requires support.
- Your thesis statement is the main point or central claim of your paper.

Checking Your Thesis Statement

- Is your thesis statement clear? Do you answer these questions:
  - What is the statement that you are trying to prove in your essay?
  - What is the support that proves your statement?
- Does your thesis statement need “to be proved,” or is it a statement of fact?
  - Could someone disagree with your thesis?
- Does your thesis specifically state what you will prove, or is it too vague or general?
  - Do you state support that you need to develop in the body of your essay? If so, how many supporting points do you state?

Thesis Statement and Essay Structure

The thesis statement is “all-present” and “all-powerful.”
- Everything in your essay should support or prove your thesis
  - In this way, your thesis is “all-present” throughout your essay
- Your paper exists to prove or support your thesis
  - Your thesis is “all-powerful” because it determines the content of your paper; if a sentence does not support your thesis, it is not needed.

Most academic essays will follow the same general structure.

- Introduce the reader to your topic or subject
  - State a Clear, Specific Thesis that the reader could possibly disagree with.
  - State Clear, Specific Support for your Thesis

- Write as many body paragraphs as necessary to support or prove your Thesis.
  - Each Body Paragraph should contain:
    - A Topic Sentence introducing One Specific Support for the Thesis
    - Specific Supporting Details and Examples for the Specific Support of the Thesis
    - A Clear Explanation of Why the Specific Support Proves the Thesis

- Restate your Thesis – you have now proved it, so say it like you believe it!
  - Summarize your Support for the Thesis.
Thesis Statements and Assignments

The first step in crafting a thesis is to determine the kind of paper you are writing (your assignment). If you have been assigned an argumentative essay, your reader will expect an argumentative thesis statement. Check with your professor if you are unsure about your type of assignment.

Thesis for the Expository Essay

- An expository paper explains something to the audience.
- An expository thesis statement might look something like this:

  *Daylight Saving Time was instituted because of positive effects on energy savings, the economy, and leisure time.*

  The reader should expect to learn about the original reasons for Daylight Saving Time. The author is NOT going to evaluate these reasons or inform the reader of his or her opinion of Daylight Saving Time. *Usually, the reader will not be able to disagree with an expository thesis statement. The reader wants to learn about the subject, so the thesis does not have to be something he or she could disagree with.*

Thesis for the Analytical Essay

- An analytical paper evaluates the subject according to some criteria, breaks the subject down into its component parts, and presents this analysis to the audience.
- An analytical thesis statement might look something like this:

  *Daylight Saving Time has mixed results: some studies have shown decreases of energy consumption while others have shown increases in energy consumption, due to differences in geography, climate, and even culture.*

  This thesis will analyze Daylight Saving Time’s effect on energy savings, and explain or evaluate how differences in geography, climate, and culture impact the effectiveness of Daylight Saving Time. *The reader could disagree with an analytical thesis statement because it evaluates a subject.*

Thesis for the Argumentative Essay

- An argumentative paper presents a statement and tries to convince the audience that the statement is correct or true. The writer states the CAUSES of things, what things MEAN, how things ARE, or how things SHOULD be, and then supports this statement with evidence proving it.
- An argumentative thesis statement might look something like this:

  *Due to changes in energy usage over time, Daylight Saving Time no longer serves any of the goals for which it was created, and its use should be discontinued worldwide.*

  This thesis states a position or argument—Daylight Saving Time should be discontinued. The reader expects the writer to support the stated position or argument with evidence that proves it. The writer will explain the original goals of Daylight Saving Time and prove that they are not being served by its continued existence. *The reader must be able to disagree with an argumentative thesis statement.*