



Developing a Thesis Statement for a Paper

What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement tells your readers what the focus of your paper is. It is a short (one or two sentence) summary of what you are going to be arguing in your paper and how you will argue it. It's generally found at the end of your introductory paragraph.

What makes a good thesis statement?

A good thesis statement is specific and takes a clear position on a debatable topic. Your thesis statement needs to be backed up by evidence presented in your paper – your paper should prove that your thesis statement is true.

How do I come up with a good thesis statement?

Step 1: Identify the broad topic of your paper.

Example: I am writing a paper about vaccination.

Step 2: Ask yourself if your topic is too broad. If it is, consider focusing it further (asking who, what, when, where, and why about your topic might help you narrow it down).

Example: I am writing a paper about vaccinating children.

Step 3: When you know your broad topic, think about a specific question you can ask about that topic.

Example: Is it important to vaccinate your children?

Step 4: Answer that question once you've researched the topic.

Example: Vaccinations for kids are important for many reasons.

Step 5: Revise the answer so that it is specific, takes a position, and lets your reader know what you're going to argue.

Example: Preventable childhood diseases are on the rise and stricter criteria for exempting kids from vaccines should be enacted to protect herd immunity in the US.

Step 5: Revise your thesis statement as needed during the writing process. As you write your paper, you may find new information that changes your opinion or changes the focus of your paper.

Vaccinations

Vaccination is a broad topic. We can focus it down further.

Vaccinating children

What questions can we ask about this topic?

Is it important to vaccinate your children?

Research the topic and take a stance.

Vaccinating kids is important for many reasons.

Check to make sure your thesis statement is specific, takes a position, and tells the reader what you will argue.

Preventable childhood diseases are on the rise and the US needs to enact stricter criteria for vaccine exemptions.

Revise your thesis statement as you learn more about your topic