

## **THE THESIS STATEMENT**

### **Regis Writing Center**

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#### **THESIS STATEMENT**

The thesis statement is a single sentence that formulates both your topic and your point of view. It states *what* is to be explained and *how* the explanation will be devised.

A thesis statement functions as a guide in planning and writing a paper. The thesis may have to be revised many times throughout the drafting process. If you are not sure what your thesis is when you begin your paper, start writing and develop a thesis as your ideas take shape. The contents of the paper and the thesis statement must be parallel. If they are not, revise either the thesis or the paper.

#### **PLANNING A THESIS STATEMENT**

While developing ideas, write them down to avoid losing useful thoughts. Then, make an assertion, a simple statement that mentions your topic and reflects your position regarding it. Develop your assertion further by stating reasons. Next, refine the vocabulary in your assertion to state exactly what you are trying to communicate. Finally, create a formal thesis from your assertion and review the thesis to make sure it connects with your paper. This process is exhibited below.

I think water is terrific.

Water is necessary for human survival and the cycles of life.

Water is necessary for human survival and the continuation of the cycles of life.

Although often taken for granted, water is necessary for human survival and the continuation of the cycles of life.

#### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR A THESIS STATEMENT**

1. It states the essay's subject.
2. It reflects the essay's purpose.
3. It includes a focus--words that convey the writer's point of view.
4. It makes a general statement--one that leads to a set of main ideas and supporting details. It is *not* merely a statement of fact that leads nowhere.
5. It uses specific language and avoids vague words.
6. It may give the major subdivisions of the topic.

## ANSWERING A QUESTION WITH YOUR THESIS

Ask the following questions to improve your thesis:

- ▶ What was the effect of X? Its cause?
- ▶ Can I break X down or analyze its main parts in order to understand it better?
- ▶ Can I compare X to another thing?
- ▶ Can I define X?
- ▶ Is X typical for some people and not for others?
- ▶ Is X good or bad, or partly good and partly bad?
- ▶ Who knows about X? Who would I see or what would I read to find out?
- ▶ What class or category of ideas or objects is X in?
- ▶ What are the facts about X? What things aren't known?
- ▶ Can I tell a story about X?
- ▶ Does X do any job that is necessary for a group, large or small?
- ▶ How is X created? Destroyed?
- ▶ How can one do or perform X?
- ▶ Can I recommend X to other people? Not recommend?
- ▶ Should I suggest changes in X?

(“X” refers to your subject or an important idea about it.)