

Purpose of a Thesis Statement

Before discussing the different types of thesis statements, it is important to define the purpose of this essential part of your paper. The thesis statement summarizes the main point of the essay. The thesis is normally found at the end of the paper's introductory paragraph. A thesis is usually a single sentence, though it can be two sentences. It acts as a guide to let your audience know the central idea of the essay and to know what to expect in the body of your paper.

Analytical Thesis Statement

An analytical essay analyzes an issue. As the writer of this type of paper, you are expected to define the topic and then break down and evaluate some aspect of that topic. An analytical thesis statement states the subject to be analyzed and shows how it will be broken down. The Purdue Online Writing Lab gives the following example of an analytical thesis statement: "An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds." The thesis shows the topic of the essay (the college admission process) and how the topic will be broken down and evaluated (the problem faced by college admission counselors).

Expository Thesis Statement

In an expository essay, you explain a topic to the audience. You must decide the most important or meaningful aspects of your topic and explain those in the body of the paper. The expository thesis statement lists the aspects of the topic that will be developed in the order in which they will be discussed. This is the method used in the following expository thesis: "The movies of John Hughes feature high school students from different walks of life, the element of teen romance and memorable soundtracks that enhance the theme of teen angst."

Argumentative Thesis Statement

Just as its title implies, an argumentative essay creates an argument by taking a stand on a subject. That "stand" you take is referred to as a claim. The body of the paper defends your claim. An argumentative thesis statement states your claim and how your paper will support this claim. For example, if you are assigned to write about whether cities should close public libraries, an argumentative thesis statement could be, "Cities should close public libraries because the libraries eat up tax money and have become obsolete institutions because of technology." The paper would defend the two elements of the argument presented in this thesis.