

DETERMINING THE CENTRAL IDEA OF YOUR PAPER

Every piece of writing requires a central idea and a demonstrated path from point A to point B. To stay on topic and give your writing a direction, you must develop a working thesis.

THE PURPOSE OF A WORKING THESIS?

Thesis statements clarify the main idea/point of your piece. Typically the final sentence(s) of your introduction, the thesis generally informs the audience of the “argument” or intent of your piece.

HOW DO WE DEVELOP A WORKING THESIS?

We develop our working thesis by answering “so what?” A working thesis is generally the rough draft version of your thesis and often changes or develops further as you research and write. However, beginning with a working thesis gives your writing a direction to follow, as everything else in your piece should tie back to and support your thesis.

You should be aware that, sometimes, your thesis will change as you write, and that’s normal. Writing is a tool for exploration, and the experience is dynamic. If you decide to alter your course, adjust your thesis to reflect that change.

Use the space below to practice writing working thesis statements:

QUALITIES OF A GOOD THESIS STATEMENT

A good thesis:

1. Clearly states the writer's defined opinion
2. Conveys a singular focus
3. Appeals to readers of the subject's audience
4. Is focused and narrowed
5. Is clear and utilizes terminology appropriately
6. Is easily found

Use this list to check yourself—does your thesis meet these qualifications?

PRACTICE EDITING AND REWRITING THESE UNCLEAR THESIS STATEMENTS

Explain why each of the following attempts are inadequate:

1. Going to the grocery can be a pain.
2. The state's new voting regulations are both good and bad.
3. The American Revolution hugely impacted the course of U.S. history.
4. North Korea's access to nuclear power is concerning.