



Writing Center

Bowling Green State University
303 Moseley Hall
(419) 372-2221
writers@bgsu.edu

TIPS:

Remember, the longer the assignment, the broader the scope (i.e., a dissertation). The shorter the essay, the narrower the scope (i.e., a 4-6 page essay).

Once you have a thesis, be sure to sharpen its focus. Don't state the obvious; get to the significance.

If you are still have questions about **thesis statements**, then refer to your *Scott, Foresman Handbook*, 7th ed. Thesis statements are discussed on pages 30-35. Be sure to practice in Exercise 3.1.

An example: Because professional boxers often sustain server injuries or brain damage in the ring, the sport should be subject to stricter safety regulations.

Created by Dr. Barbara Toth and Amanda McGuire 2005

Moseley Lab Hall Hours:

Mon & Thurs 9-5

Tues & Wed 9-8

Fri 10-2

Bromfield Satellite Hours:

Sun & Mon 6-10pm

MacDonald Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues 6-10pm

H. S. R. C. Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues 6-11pm

Mon & Wed 6-10pm

Thesis Statements

1. What is a *thesis*?

- According to *The Scott Foresman Handbook*, 7th ed., "A thesis is a sentence (or sometimes two or three sentences) that explicitly identifies the point of the paper" (30).

2. How does a thesis statement function?

- Thesis statements suggest the organization of the essay and direct the reader through the essay. Think of it like this: the thesis statement is a map that navigates readers through an essay.
- Also, thesis statements become a contract between you and the reader; they're a promise that you will follow through on what you've said. The thesis statement, in a sense, is a commitment. How true you are to that commitment determines how effective your essay is.

3. How to structure a thesis:

- Begin by asking yourself, "What is my subject?" Then ask yourself, "What is the significant thing I want to say about my subject?"
- A debatable subject usually makes an effective thesis.
- A thesis is argumentative if some people might reasonably disagree with it and there are reasonable grounds for supporting one viewpoint over another.
- Think about the thesis as an equation:
SUBJECT + POINT OF SIGNIFICANCE = THESIS

4. Effective thesis statements contain qualifiers.

- Some examples of qualifying words are *often, frequently, too often, regularly, some, many, and most*.
- Qualifiers demonstrate that you are aware of your audience. For example, avoid words such as *all, none, always, and never* because they could be offensive to your readers. Remember that if you use a word like *Americans* without a qualifier, it means **all** Americans by default.
- Qualifiers make the thesis manageable for the writer and credible to the readers.

5. How to avoid "I" in thesis statements:

- Think in terms of the subject and verb of your thesis. You will then be focusing on the subject of the essay rather than on "I."
- Remember that "I" is not the subject of the essay; you are not writing about yourself.
- If you find that you are using "I," ask yourself what larger group "I" might represent. The answer might be "other undergrad students" or "English 111 students." Try substituting the group for "I."