



TIP SHEET: WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT



Once you have chosen a topic and started to do some research for your essay, it's time to think about your thesis statement. A thesis statement is one or two sentences outlining the main idea of your essay. It is usually situated in the introduction, often at the end of the introductory paragraph. It lets your readers know what to expect and helps you to stay on track while you plan and write your paper.

How to write an effective thesis statement:

- **Outline the topic and its significance.** In other words, your topic and what you want to say about your topic. If you're writing about concussion in football, your thesis statement will state the focus of your essay. For example, "Concussions can have a serious long-term impact on NFL players." Now it is clear that my essay will outline negative effects of concussion on professional football players.
- **Have a focus that is not too broad or too narrow.** You should be able to deal with the topic effectively within the length of the paper. If the focus is too wide, your essay will not be able to go into much detail. If the focus is too narrow, you may struggle to find enough content to write the essay.
- **Give an accurate picture of the content of the essay.** Provide a 'road map' for your reader, so that they know where the paper is going. If your thesis statement doesn't reflect the content of your essay, your reader will get lost and confused.

- **Make a statement about the essay topic**, rather than announcing the topic. Compare the following examples:
 - This essay will be about conflict resolution in the workplace.
 - Negotiation is an important component of conflict resolution in the workplace.

The first example just announces the topic, while the second states the main focus of the essay.

Your thesis statement is not set in stone; it will probably be refined as you research and write your essay. As you are planning and writing your essay, make sure that each of your main points supports your thesis statement. This will help you to develop a strong and unified argument or narrative and get a great grade for your paper!

FINALLY...

If you need more information about essay writing, or answers to questions about specific assignments, you can:

- Check out the JIBC Library website at www.jibc.ca/library
- Contact JIBC Peer Writing Support
Email writingsupport@jibc.ca to make an appointment
- Grab additional tip sheets from the Writing Centre, located at the New Westminster Campus in room CL201



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