

## THESIS STATEMENTS

A **thesis statement** is a sentence that briefly but thoroughly explains the point you will be making in the paper. It should include the controlling idea, an assertion, and preview.

### Controlling idea + Assertion + Preview

A thesis statement contains a CONTROLLING IDEA that outlines the focus of your paper.

A thesis statement makes an ASSERTION that introduces your stance about that focus.

A thesis statement provides a PREVIEW of the content and organization of the essay.

### Examples

**BAD:** Drug abuse is a big problem.

**BETTER:** Heroin, long regarded as a street drug, is fast becoming the drug of choice among middle class urban professionals.

*The second one is more successful than the first because it is specific about both the subject of the paper and what argument the paper will make.*

**BAD:** There is a lot of symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter*.

**BETTER:** Hawthorne's use of symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* falters and ultimately breaks down with the introduction of the character Pearl.

*The second one is more successful than the first because it uses the topic as the subject of the sentence and then employs a strong, active verb (not a derivative of "to be") to make a specific assertion about that topic.*

### Ask yourself ...

- ☒ Is your thesis specific?
- ☒ Is it concise?
- ☒ Does it have a strong subject and verb?
- ☒ Does it introduce the organizational structure of your essay?
- ☒ Does it cover everything you plan to cover in your paper?