

### Thesis statements

A thesis is the central argument that you will make about that topic. The thesis is the controlling idea of the essay; every sentence and paragraph in the essay must provide supporting statements and specific information to prove the thesis. The sooner you can state the thesis clearly and concisely, the more efficient and productive your thinking and note taking will be. Note how each thesis statement below contains a clearly focused argument. A thesis may be proved affirmatively or negatively. A thesis may be interpretive.

### Supporting statements

Supporting statements are the main points in your argument to prove your thesis. Supporting statements contain the evidence to support your thesis. Supporting statements are your conclusions about a subject.

### Sample literary thesis statements

TOPIC	QUESTION AND THESIS STATEMENT
Character	In <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> , Nathaniel Hawthorne depicts Pearl as alien to her society until her father acknowledges her.
Relationships among Characters	In <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> , Salinger shows that the relationship between Holden and Phoebe acts as a positive force on Holden.
Themes	<i>Brave New World</i> is a satire on people's use of distraction as a means to be happy.
Style: Effective use of imagery, foreshadowing, or symbolism to advance character development, theme or artistic purpose	Through the use of images and symbols in <i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> , Salinger reveals many subtleties about Holden's sensitive personality
Style: The point of view, or narration advance character development, theme or artistic purpose	The final fifth of <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> does not help fulfill Mark Twain's artistic purpose in the novel.
Setting	The raft on the Mississippi River in <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> is a place with different rules than the towns along the river.
Structure	In <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> , Mark Twain uses the river journey to illustrate Huck's increasing awareness of the moral hypocrisy in the "civilized" South.
Historical Context: The social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created	Arthur Miller changed some of the facts about the Salem Witch Trials in his play, <i>The Crucible</i> , to advance his artistic purpose.
Critical Overview: Background on critical reputation of the novel including controversies	Due to coarse language, racist overtones, and immoral situations, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> should not be taught as a classroom text in high schools.
Media Adaptations	The 1992 movie <i>Of Mice and Men</i> more poignantly expresses the alienation and loneliness of migrant farm workers than the novel.

From:

"How to Develop a Thesis Statement (Literary Criticism)." *Slimsbury High Library*.

[www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/teachers/jroche/library/ResearchPapers/English%20Dept/howtodevelopathesislitcrit.htm](http://www.simsbury.k12.ct.us/teachers/jroche/library/ResearchPapers/English%20Dept/howtodevelopathesislitcrit.htm).