

The Thesis Statement

Step One: Your Assertion

You already have picked a topic and your side on that topic. Write your topic, with your position on it here. You do not need to write it in a complete sentence.

Step Two: Slugging the Cards

The first step in developing a thesis statement comes from your note cards. To do this, you need to remove all of your source cards and set them in their own pile. Now take your note cards sort them into like categories. After sorting the cards, you will write a word or two that labels that category on that note card in the upper left corner.

Slug	Source Code Page Number
One Piece of information	

<i>Origins</i>	<i>A</i> <i>349</i>
<i>Elizabeth Bathory killed over 160 young girls to bath in their blood.</i>	

Step Three: Picking Your Categories

You probably have three or four categories that really have more information in them than the others. These will be your main points. List those categories here:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
-

Step Four: Putting It Together Into a Thesis Statement

What is a thesis statement? One book puts it as:

“The thesis of your essay is your opinion boiled down to one arguable statement.”

Another says it is the one main point of your essay. In any case, your thesis will come in the first paragraph and tell your reader what the paper is all about. As the UNC Writing Center states, “Note that a thesis is an *interpretation* of a subject, not the subject itself.” Make sure that it:

- expresses one main idea
- it takes on a subject that people could disagree
- and it asserts your conclusions about the subject (shows your stand on the issue)

Make sure that it does not:

- use “I,” “my,” or any other first person pronoun
- use “you” or any other second person pronoun
- become a question (thus the term, thesis *statement*)
- include information that is not mentioned in your paper
- leaves out information included in your paper
- does not mention itself or the paper (The thesis of this paper...)

Examples of good and bad thesis statements:

BAD: People use many lawn chemicals. (Yawn!)

BAD: The thesis of this paper is the problems with using chemicals to improve lawns. (Don’t mention the thesis in your thesis!)

GOOD: People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawn clean.

BAD: The brain has two sides that work in a very interesting way. (What way? This is too vague!)

* Helpful Hint *

You can use your categories to make an easy thesis statement. If my topic is about only eating ice cream as a good weight loss program and my categories are (1) food groups, (2) healthful benefits of ice cream ingredients, and (3) case where it worked, then I could write the following thesis:

Eating only ice cream is an excellent way to lose weight because it involves many of the four food groups, many of the ingredients have healthy effects, and there are many examples of weight loss from people who have tried this diet.

To use this technique, you merely state your point and then list your categories. This is also an easy way to make sure that you do not have information in your paper that you are not supposed to have.