How do I know if I have a good thesis statement?

- Your thesis statement should take a stand on a specific issue and address one main idea.
- A reasonable person might disagree with your statement. (A controversial issue has opposing viewpoints.)
- A reasonable person would not respond "So what?" or "Who cares?" or "Everybody knows that!" to your thesis statement.

Tips for success:

- Typically, your thesis statement appears at the end of the first paragraph of your research paper.
- Don’t use the first person (i.e., I think, or, my opinion).
- Support your opinion with the facts you find in your research.
- Anticipate the opposition and address it.
- As you learn more through your research, you may reach a different conclusion than you expected. If so, it’s okay to revise your thesis statement, even if you have submitted a thesis statement to your professor!


- Try this online tool which will help you create a concise, one-sentence thesis statement.
- After you create your best thesis statement, use the BUILD AN OUTLINE link to get a blueprint for exactly how to write YOUR research paper.
What is a thesis statement?

- It is a one-sentence guide for your readers to what you will PROVE in your research paper.
- It is an opinion statement for which you will present supporting evidence.
- It is a clear expression of YOUR viewpoint, which must be a claim that a reasonable person might dispute.
- It is the most important sentence in your paper!

How do I create a thesis statement?

- Choose an issue you'd like to explore.
- Read, read, read about your topic! Whatever you do, don't skip this step! It will not only save you time, but it will also prevent disaster later on.
- Brainstorm your ideas about the topic.
- Write a few questions you might want to answer in your research paper.
- Compose a few complete sentences that might answer the questions.

"Even though...nevertheless...because"

Here is a formula for drafting a thesis statement:

- Even though (or although): states the main argument AGAINST your opinion
- Nevertheless: tells your basic opinion or position on the topic (consider using the word “should” for this part)
- Because: states the strongest evidence that SUPPORTS your opinion.

Examples from both sides of an issue:

Here are two examples, each taking a different side of whether high schools students should wear uniforms:

- Even though uniforms offer little freedom of self-expression, nevertheless, high schools should require uniforms because they minimize fashion distractions that can interfere with learning and they are less expensive.
- Even though uniforms are economical and minimize fashion distractions, nevertheless, high schools should not require uniforms because individual choice in dress helps students learn the values of freedom and responsibility.

Topic→Research Question→Thesis statement

Here is an example of how you might progress from choosing a topic to asking a research question to creating a thesis statement on both sides of the issue.

- Topic: Standardized testing
- Research Question: Should high school students be required to pass a standardized exit exam to graduate from high school?
- Thesis Statement 1: Even though high school exit exams ensure that graduates a set of minimal skills, nevertheless, exit exams should be abolished because they do not measure important qualities like creativity and critical thinking and they discourage innovative teaching.
- Thesis Statement 2: Even though high school exit exams do not measure creativity or critical thinking, nevertheless, exit exams should be mandatory because they ensure that graduates have a set of minimal skills and they hold teachers accountable for student performance.