



Building and Revising a Thesis

Building a Thesis Statement:

The content of every well-crafted essay can be summarized in one complete sentence: a thesis statement. A thesis statement is a concise and complete expression (usually in one sentence) of your essay's main ideas. Every thesis statement should consist of two components: a topic and a claim.

Topic

Space exploration...

Computers...

Claim

...can yield exciting new technologies, rally patriotism, and inspire youth to study science.

...have become an essential part of our educational communities, our business interactions, and our personal lives.

Thesis statements don't "just happen." They require deliberate and careful thought. You don't have to have a thesis statement to start drafting, but a well-crafted thesis statement is essential for your final draft.

Revising a Thesis Statement:

Thesis statements grow, change, and evolve. Rarely will the first draft of a thesis statement survive unchanged throughout the drafting process. So, it's okay to start with a "working thesis." As you consider your topic and conduct additional research, your thesis statement should grow increasingly more detailed and sophisticated.

Working Thesis: The Detroit Lions are a horrible football team.

Revised Thesis: Due to a lack of coaching continuity, poor draft choices, and a series of injuries, the Detroit Lions have failed to achieve their full potential.

Building and Revising a Thesis: Put the Tools to Work!

1. Gather your preliminary notes and ideas, then open a document on which to write.
2. Start out simple: write your topic and claim, then combine them to construct your “working thesis” statement. Refer to the examples above to refresh your understanding of pairing topics with claims.
3. Now, list reasons for supporting and NOT supporting your thesis statement. Carefully consider what your audience may think and feel regarding your argument. How would they agree and/or disagree with you? Answering this question will help you to develop a strong, defensible thesis statement that not only addresses your essay’s main ideas, but also the significance of your essay/argument.
4. Using the information you compiled, begin revising your thesis statement based on what you feel are your strongest points and/or reasons for your argument/claim being valid and important. Include these strong points in your revised thesis statement.