

# Thesis Statements

After you have broken down the prompt, you are able to create your thesis statement using the answers to your questions. Your thesis statement is THE single most important SENTENCE of your paper. It should ONLY be ONE sentence.

## Thesis Statement Checklist

It should NOT be vague, but should clearly express what your essay is about.

It should NOT be factual information, but make a discussable/arguable point.

It should NOT start with, "In this essay I will...", but indicate the structure of the essay.

## Example

***"Failure isn't always the best feeling in the world, but without it people will never grow or find out who they are as a person."***

This thesis statement clearly (1) expresses what the essay is about [failure], gives a topic that can be (2) discussed and argued [that it shows true character], and (3) indicates the structure of the essay [that failure forces people to grow and discover themselves].

**Do I address the prompt?** Re-reading the prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that has missed the focus of the assignment.

**Have I taken a position that others might challenge or oppose?** If your thesis simply states facts that no one could disagree with, it's possible that you are simply providing a summary, rather than making an argument.

**Is my thesis statement specific enough?** Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific.

**Does my thesis pass the "So what?" test?** If a reader's first response after reading your thesis statement is, "So what?," then you need to clarify or connect to a larger issue.

**Does my thesis pass the "How?" and "Why?" tests?** If a reader's first response after reading your thesis statement is "How?" or "Why?," your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on what your position is in the paper.