

Generating a Thesis Statement



Thesis Statement

- As the topic sentence must be the unifying force in the paragraph the thesis is the unifying force in the essay.
- All essays that involve the development of an argument require a thesis. While the topic is your limited subject, the thesis defines your position on that subject. Your essay will take a position and will provide convincing evidence to support that view.
- A working thesis directs your thoughts and research; of course your thesis may change as your reading and writing progresses and you begin to incorporate new information.
- **Your thesis states a fact about your topic and your point of view on the topic.**

Cable television has not delivered on its promise to provide an alternative solution to network programming.

Moving from Broad to Limited Subject

Broad topic: Music >

Latin Music >

Latin Jazz >

Latin Dance

still too broad topic: Salsa Music

still too broad topic: Salsa Music Development in Puerto Rico

Limited subject Salsa Music Development in Puerto Rico during
the 1970's

Key Words

Salsa

history

music

Puerto Rico

Cuba

culture


Tito Puente, Celia Cruz, Hector Lavoe,

Latin Jazz

dance, etc.

Crafting an Introduction

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE FOR WORKING OPENING PARAGRAPH: MAPPING OF AN IDEA

- I. Music defines the human experience. (BROAD SUBJECT)
 - A. No matter the culture
 - B. Music offers sense of history, identity
 - C. Development of a people, race
 - D. Diverse cultures, diverse music
 - E. Types of Latina Musica as example, regionalized music
 - F. Salsa in particular
 - G. Salsa from Puerto Rico popular even in U.S. (LIMITED SUBJECT)
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**Notice how the key words appear in the outline; your opening paragraph should include these.*

***Notice how the outline also shows the process of moving from the broad to limited subject.*

Thesis and Introduction Paragraph

The following paragraph based on the outline:

Music defines the human experience. No matter the culture, music offers the listener a sense of history and identity. It shows the development of a race of people through the diversity of the people. Latin Music itself displays a wide collection of different styles and rhythms. Each style comes from a different region of the Caribbean or Latin America. In particular, Salsa has a rich history of regional influences. Since its early beginnings in the 1970's, Salsa remains a popular music choice today, even in the U.S., because it offers a strong sense of definition for the Hispanic experience for Latino residents.

Notice the last sentence, acting as the thesis, sums up the introduction paragraph and supports the opening topic sentence.

Tips for Writing a Thesis

Remember:

Topic of Interest > Preliminary Research > Opinion/Observation on Research =

Thesis statement

capital punishment > NY Times article with statistics > your opinion =

Thesis statement

When writing these types of papers you are not writing a *persuasive* paper.

It is an *informative* paper. You are gathering critical analysis on your topic which defends or clarifies your thesis statement.

Tips for Writing a Thesis

1. Determine what kind of paper you are writing:

- analytical
- expository
- argumentative

An **analytical paper** breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.

Poe primarily uses elements insanity within his anti-heros to instill fear in his readers.

Tips for Writing a Thesis

An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.

Asthma, a condition that affects the lungs, is a disease that many people have. Asthma is most commonly thought to be hereditary. One known cause for an attack is an allergic reaction, but stress and vigorous activity are thought to be causes as well. This disease can be fatal if it is not taken care of immediately, but with the medical technology of today, mild asthma is more of a nuisance than a life threatening disease.

Tips for Writing a Thesis

Argumentative papers make claims about a topic and justifies this claim with evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a proposal, an evaluation, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

Statistics have proven media violence has a negative effect on the younger generation. Despite efforts to raise awarem violence shown on television, the major networks and cable stations refuse to reform their actions.

Television companies themselves should be held responisible for their program content and not merely parents.

Tips for Writing a Thesis

2. Your thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should show specific evidence that you will use. Plus the thesis will hint at what your concluding statement will say.

3. A thesis statement usually includes the following conditions:

- takes on a subject which promotes discussion and intellectual debate
- expresses one main complete idea
- suggests a probable conclusion to the paper

Writer's Block?

If still completely lost:

- brainstorm the topic and conduct more preliminary research on the subject
 - > what are other people saying about the topic?
 - > do you agree with the material you collected from the library orientation?
 - > have you gone back to the database to look for more articles on the topic?
 - > pre-write your initial ideas to gain a complete observation

- narrow the topic to a very specific situation, time, or demographic:
 - > capital punishment is a too broad of topic
 - > current demographics of in the prison system on death row in TX
is a limited subject

Writer's Block?

- take a position on the topic
 - > decide what you want to say about the limited subject.
 - > why are prison populations mainly minority groups and *not* white Americans?
 - > why are there no institutions set up to reform criminals?
 - > are more minorities executed than white prisoners?
 - > should more attention be paid to demographics of prison systems in Texas?
- your paper's thesis should answer: "Why" or "How"

When you started thinking about the paper, you may not have had a specific question in mind, but as you become more involved in the topic, your ideas become more specific. *Your thesis can change to reflect your new insights.*

Writer's Block?

Your research paper is not simply a *Yes, we should!* or *No, we shouldn't!* —

Consider various questions on the topic:

- > Why are executions in Texas on the raise/decline?
- > Why are violent crimes on the raise if we have a capital punishment in place?
- > Why are prisons over-crowded if we have a capital punishment policy in place?
- > How many states do not conduct capital punishment?
- > Why is capital punishment popular in Texas?
- > How did capital punishment originate?
- > How many minorities are on death row?
- > How many whites are on death row?
- > How can we prevent violent crime in America/Texas?
- > How will reform measures change the number of death-row inmates?