Creating a Thesis Statement

What *is* a thesis statement?

A thesis statement is the core of most academic essays. It is a focused statement that summarizes the main point/argument of your essay and provides the reader with the purpose of your writing. As academic writers, our goal is to present our argument to readers in a clear, original, and specific way.

There are three major parts to consider when crafting a thesis statement:

- The **Topic**
- The **Claim**
- The **"So What?"** (The "So What?" is the reason why your readers should care about the point you're making.)

An easy to remember formula: T + C because SW? **[Topic + Claim because "So What?"]**

The *Topic* of a thesis is whatever the overall essay is about. For example, your topic may be the commercial fishing industry.

The *Claim* part of your thesis is your argument; it is a stance on the issue you brought up in the topic. For example, the commercial fishing industry is making subsistence living in Alaska harder on Indigenous peoples.

The *"So What?"* of your thesis lets your readers know why they should care about the topic and claim you are making. For example, the commercial fishing industry is making subsistence living in Alaska harder on Indigenous peoples because these communities depend on subsistence fishing to survive.

Now let's dive into what a good thesis statement looks like. Let's say you want to write an essay about your love of dark chocolate. Which of the following sentences would work as a thesis statement?

1) I eat dark chocolate every day about an hour after dinner but an hour before the time I brush my teeth.
2) Dark chocolate is a confectionary treat that many people enjoy.
3) I feel like dark chocolate is both yummy and good for my health in some way.

Did you see a sentence that seemed to work as a thesis statement…no? That's because none of the above are good examples of a thesis statements, but let's look into why that is:

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#1 isn't a strong enough thesis because it is **_only_** descriptive. With a thesis statement, you want to be able to have a conversation with someone about your topic; if your thesis only contains description, there aren't any real claims, questions to address, or other perspectives to consider.

#2 isn't a strong enough thesis because it isn't original—there is nothing to debate! People already know that some people like dark chocolate; otherwise, it wouldn't sell. In academic writing, you want to give your readers something new to think about that also inspires a conversation.

#3 isn't a strong enough thesis because it expresses a *feeling* rather than an argument backed by facts. Even if you *feel* strongly about something, it won't hold up as a thesis statement without evidence.

However, we could re-write #3 to be a somewhat stronger thesis statement: <u>Eating dark chocolate is a good thing that everyone should add to their daily diet.</u>

Now we have a statement that is close to being a good thesis statement, but we are missing one thing: the **_"So What?"_** The **_"So What?"_** introduces the reason *why* readers should care about what you are writing about.

Example: Eating a piece of dark chocolate once a day is something that everyone should implement in their daily routine *because* it promotes a healthy diet which results in a better quality of life.

The *because* introduces the answer to the *why*/**_"So What?"_** *Why* is eating a piece of dark chocolate a good idea? *Because* it promotes a healthy diet and results in a better quality of life! (A **_"So What?"_** will often involve a reward, consequence, or some big-picture impact.)

Another form of thesis statement could involve the words "although" or "however," as these can be used to address a counterpoint. A counterpoint acknowledges a different position or perspective than your argument proposes. By including a counterpoint, you acknowledge both sides of an argument but uphold that your stance is still the right one for readers to consider.

Example: Although some may argue that eating chocolate is detrimental to your health because it adds unnecessary sugars to one's diet, such accusations are misinformed and discredit the health benefits that dark chocolate offers to one's daily dietary health.

Let's take a look at some more examples of some ways to turn ideas into thesis statements!

Idea: Keyless car fobs are convenient.

Thesis Statement: Although some people might find keyless car fobs inconvenient because they depend on batteries to operate, keyless car fobs are quite convenient because drivers no longer must worry about breaking their keys inside frozen door locks.

Idea: CDs are going out of style.

Thesis Statement: While some might prefer listening to their music via CDs, the technology that allows us to utilize discs is becoming quickly outdated. Therefore, continuing the production of CDs are adding needlessly to the worlds waste.

Now you try!

Idea: _____ (type of food) is superior to _____ (type of food).

Thesis Statement:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Turn to the next page for a comprehensive activity to practice your thesis-creation skills!

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Turning Ideas into Thesis Statements: Comprehensive Activity

To really understand a concept, we must practice it. Try your hand at the activity below to put your new thesis-creation skills to the test!

1) Write three topics down that interest you below

Topic:_____

Topic:_____

Topic:_____

2) Now pick your two favorite topics and make a claim for them. (Topic + Claim)

Topic:_____ + Claim: _____

Topic:_____ + Claim: _____

3) Next, pick your favorite topic/claim and create a "*So What*." (Topic + Claim because *"So What?"*)

Topic:_____

+ Claim: _____

_____

because_____

_____.

Now read all three pieces together—that's your strong thesis statement! Great work. You can use this formula to help generate thesis statements for your upcoming essay assignments.