**Thesis = subject + opinion (commentary)**

The thesis statement is ONE SENTENCE

It is what your ENTIRE PAPER IS ABOUT.

**Be sure your thesis...**

1. takes a stand- do not just state an observation.
2. expresses one main idea- keep it narrow and specific.

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: *why* is something “good”; *what specifically* makes something “successful”?

* **Does my thesis pass the “So what?” test?** If a reader’s first response is, “So what?” then you need to clarify, to forge a relationship, or to connect to a larger issue.
* **Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?** If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change. It’s o.k. to change your working thesis to reflect things you have figured out in the course of writing your paper. Remember, always reassess and revise your writing as necessary.
* **Does my thesis pass the “how and why?” test?** If a reader’s first response 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 your position right from the beginning.

## Common Errors in Thesis statements

1. Don’t make your thesis merely an announcement of your subject matter or a description of your intentions.
2. Don’t clutter your thesis with expressions such as “in my opinion,” “I believe,” and “in this essay I’ll argue that…”
3. Don’t be unreasonable. Making irrational or oversimplified claims will not persuade your reader that you have a thorough understanding of the issue.
4. Don’t merely state a fact. A thesis is an assertion of opinion that leads to discussion. Don’t select an idea that is self-evident or dead-ended.
5. Don’t express your thesis in the form of a question or a cliché.

**Sample Thesis Statements**

The blatant exploitation of women that occurs in our media today is physically and emotionally damaging for women, and our society’s tolerance of this objectification is morally reprehensible.

Cyber-bullyingshould be a criminal, punishable offense in the United States in order to protect the nation’s children and teenagers from the devastating, long-term effects that can lead to loss of life.

In order to reduce the number of teenagecosmetic surgeries and eating disorders,

decreasing social and media influence on body image is crucial.