**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 Synthesis Thesis Statements**

These are examples of Universal Theme statements (and thesis statements) that earn an EXCEEDS.

Fervent people who feel an abundance of one emotion will also experience an equal amount of the opposite sentiment.

The very nature of negative, pessimistic people drives others with potential to success, as the naysayer’s methods are the impetus for action.

Those who inadvertently harm others feel needless guilt, while people who intentionally bring about conflict often do not feel remorseful for their transgressions.

When immersed in a community of impassive people, a normally abiding and commonplace individual can be spurred into action by the lethargy of those surrounding them.