

DLA: Writing Effective Thesis Statements

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OBJECTIVE: The academic essay is the form of writing used in most college classes. This type of writing requires a thesis statement that clearly states the main point or claim of your essay. A strong thesis statement helps a writer stay focused and achieve his/her purpose for writing the essay. It shows a reader what to expect in reading the essay. In this activity, students will review the criteria for an effective thesis statement. Then, they will use the criteria to create their own thesis statements for the essays listed below.

ACTIVITY: Ask students to assume that they have been assigned an essay of between 500-1000 words. Review the topics below. Then decide on an **audience** and **purpose** for each topic and write a **thesis statement** for each one. Remember that a thesis statement is an assertion or claim that requires proof. It should be focused and specific and appropriate for the length of the assignment. It should also make a point worth pursuing (the “so what” factor) and suggest the organization of the essay. (For a 20 – 25 minute session, choose a few of the topics below)

1. You are writing an essay in which you analyze the effects of parental expectations on you or another person.
2. You are writing an essay in which you discuss a change in your point of view and the ways in which it affected you.
3. You are writing an essay in which you analyze the reasons you have set a particular goal.
4. You are writing an essay on the reasons for the growing homeless population in the U.S.
5. You are writing an essay in which you discuss the reasons people form cliques or you discuss the effects of cliques on those inside and outside the group.
6. You are writing an essay about an important turning point in your life. Be sure to explain what caused the change and how it affected your life.
7. You are writing an essay in which you discuss a challenge you have faced in your life, focusing on the way it has affected you and the way in which you have overcome it.

REVIEW: The tutor asks the student to explain the choices made for each topic. Specifically, ask:

- What were the reasons for determining the intended audience and purpose for writing in each case?
- Why is each thesis statement appropriate for the audience and purpose?
- How does each thesis statement meet the criteria for an effective thesis statement?