Strong Thesis Statements

**Formula:** Thesis = Topic + Position

- Is your topic focused? Too broad?
- Is it debatable? discussable?
- Does it take a stand?
- Does it make claims?
- Does it provide a road map for your paper?
1. **Focused:** A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad. **If it is sufficiently narrow, it can be more fully supported.**

**Original Thesis:** Being human comes from an understanding of compassion.

**Revised Thesis:** Being human comes from an innate understanding of worth and expression of compassion for others as seen in the writings of John Locke.
2. **Debatable**: A Thesis makes a claim, not a statement of fact or an observation.

3. **Picks a side**: A thesis takes a stand rather than announcing a subject or telling explicitly what you’re going to do in the paper.

**Original Thesis**: Scientific knowledge is important and rewarding.

**Revised Thesis**: Without any thought for personal gain, Galileo’s methods and discoveries revolutionized the nature of science more than any other individual from the 16th and 17th centuries.
A Strong Thesis...

- Offers specific ways to understand the capstone question. It needs to be **narrow** so it can be supported by evidence/examples.

- **Makes claims** that others **might dispute or debate**. Not merely fact or observation or an announcement.

- Provides a **road map or direction** for the paper; it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper.

- Takes a stand: Tells the reader how you will **interpret the significance** of the subject matter under discussion. Answers the question of “So What” or “why”?
Hint:

- Many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like “because”, “since”, “so”, “although”, “unless”, and “however”
Thesis Sample:

- Focused:
  Being human comes from an innate understanding of worth and expression of compassion for others as seen in the writings of John Locke.

- Not focused:
  Being human comes from an innate understanding of an individual's worth and expression of compassion for others.
Thesis: Obsessed with need for justice, Robespierre’s decisions and actions corrupted his pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness.

- Influenced by ideals of the Enlightenment, Robespierre initially sought to benefit his nation by securing the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity for the French people.
- Robespierre chose an extreme solution to secure his idea of virtue among the citizens.
- By valuing the law above morality, Robespierre became a tyrant who betrayed the same ideals he fought to instill in the French people.
EFFECTIVE OR NOT? HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE IT?

- Robespierre made inhumane decisions that waged war against his own people.
- Andreas Vesalius pursued knowledge by going against the values and rules of his society.
- Galileo proves that knowledge is not its own end when he puts knowledge to use making discoveries in science regardless of the Church’s concern.
- The purpose of pursuing knowledge is the betterment of mankind as a whole as shown by the writings of Francesco Petrarch.
- A proper and effective government protects natural rights.
-Possessing and being committed to core values is an essential human trait as seen by the decisions and actions of Nicolaus Copernicus.
- Napoleon’s decisions corrupted his pursuit of truth causing extreme consequences for the people of Europe.
MLA REVIEW

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_powerpoint_presentation.html