


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 *Frankenstein* and the writings of John Locke.



2. Debatable: A Thesis is an assertion, not a statement of fact or an observation.

Original Thesis: Scientific knowledge can be good or bad.

► **Revised Thesis:** Galileo made discoveries that advanced science while Frankenstein uses his scientific knowledge in an attempt for personal gain.



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 can be important.

➤ **Revised thesis:** Galileo made discoveries that advanced science while Frankenstein uses his scientific knowledge in an attempt for personal gain.



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 *Frankenstein* and 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 with claims:

Thesis: In the pursuit of truth and goodness, Robespierre wanted justice while Beowulf protects the helpless.

- Robespierre initially sought to benefit his nation, but in the end he valued the law above morality, and Beowulf desires to defend King Hrothgar's subjects in pursuit of their safety without seeking individual gain.
- Robespierre chose an extreme solution to secure his idea of virtue among the citizens while Beowulf puts himself in the way of danger for the sole purpose of assisting others.



Samples:

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

Being human comes from an innate understanding of an individual's worth and expression of compassion for others.