

Steps to Form a Thesis

1. Define your purpose and audience.
2. Identify the research activities—Which information will you need to convince your audience?
3. Formulate questions your research will explore—Create 3-4 questions most important to your audience that you will address in your paper.
4. After doing some initial research, turn your questions into a potential position statement that suggests the meaning, relevance, or importance of the evidence for your audience—What do you want your audience to do or believe after reading your paper—and why?
5. Test the thesis. Does it:
 - Make a specific and narrowly focused claim?
 - Take an arguable position?
 - Go beyond opinion and is supported by credible evidence?
 - Offer new insights?

A “Thesis Maker” You Can Try:

1. Although _____,
(general statement, idea, or opinion opposite to the one you will argue)
2. nevertheless, _____,
(thesis—what you want your audience to do or believe) (Specific Noun + Active Verb + Specific Modifier)
3. because _____.
(the position or points you will support in your paper by using PIE)

One Way to Organize Paragraphs or Paper Sections:

P = student writer’s Point (= student’s voice). Try to make the point sentence in one sentence.

I = Information/evidence from relevant reliable sources to discuss the point (= other voices)

Student writers should provide sufficient evidence including scholarly and substantial written sources (secondary research) plus the student’s own interviews and field observations (primary research). Evidence should be accurate brief quotations, summaries, and paraphrases of sources, with accurate citations. (Sources should be used both to ask questions **and** to provide answers. *Quote, paraphrase, or summarize in order to analyze*-see below.)

E = Explanation, Elaboration, Evaluation, Exploration, and analysis of the information just provided in the body of the paragraph (= student’s voice again).

In the paragraph’s concluding sentences, the student writer *makes meaning* by exploring the information/evidence he/she has just cited. The student writer develops the implications of the evidence just provided by repeatedly asking herself, “*So what?*” and then responding to this question on paper. Experienced writers do not assume that either the meaning of their source material or their reason for including it is self-evident. Instead, experienced writers explain to their readers what the quotation or paraphrase or summary of the source means. Think: “What elements of the evidence cited do I want to explain and emphasize? How does it relate to my evolving thesis?”

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Every writer needs a reader.