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Writing a Thesis Statement

What is a thesis statement?
A thesis is an **arguable statement** that can be supported with evidence. It should include both the main argument of the paper as well as the supporting arguments that you will use to back this claim up. It should not be vague or merely a summary of facts without analysis or interpretation.

1) A thesis statement must be **debatable:**

Example of a non-debatable thesis statement:

Pollution is bad for the environment.

Example of a debatable thesis statement:

At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.

Another example of a debatable thesis statement:

America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars.

2) A thesis statement must be **narrow**:

Example of a thesis that is too broad:

The government should work to fight pollution.

Narrowed debatable thesis 1:

At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution.

Narrowed debatable thesis 2:

America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts and care about the outcome.

3) A thesis statement makes **claims** that will be supported later in the paper:

Example of a thesis that doesn't make any claims:

Humans should relocate to Mars.

Thesis with claims to be supported:

It is too late to save earth; therefore, humans should immediately set a date for their relocation to Mars where, with proper planning, they can avoid issues of famine, war, and global warming.

Our example (based on Solomon et al. 2009 paper): Climate change poses a greater and longer-lived threat to human life than previously considered because of irreversible increases in global temperature, rise in sea level, and changes in precipitation patterns caused by past anthropogenic emissions.

What is good about this thesis statement? What could be improved?

Take a look at the below thesis statements. Determine if they are complete thesis statements and revise them if necessary.

As developing countries become larger players in industrialization and production, a substantial shift in emissions regulations should be made to compensate for the increasing rates of environmental degradation.

Farmers are implementing alternative methods to sustainable food production to reduce the effects of climate change.

Livestock production cannot be the solution for growing world population and hunger. Livestock (solely for products) negatively affects the environment in many ways.

Although the actions of humans have committed Earth's climate to an irreversible level of change, geoengineering may be a plausible method of slowing or reversing Earth's unfavorable forecast.

Increasing global surface temperatures resulting from human induced climate change is and will continue to greatly affect the range and distribution of many major terrestrial and marine animal species.

Time permitting: with a partner, brainstorm three thesis statements based on the IPCC Summary to Policymakers that we read last week.

Stuck on figuring out the type of thesis you want to write? Check out four types of argumentative thesis claims below:

Claims typically fall into one of four categories. Thinking about how you want to approach your topic, in other words what type of claim you want to make, is one way to focus your thesis on one particular aspect of your broader topic.

Claims of fact or definition: These claims argue about what the definition of something is or whether something is a settled fact. Example:

What some people refer to as global warming is actually nothing more than normal, long-term cycles of climate change.

Claims of cause and effect: These claims argue that one person, thing, or event caused another thing or event to occur. Example:

The popularity of SUV's in America has caused pollution to increase.

Claims about value: These are claims made of what something is worth, whether we value it or not, how we would rate or categorize something. Example:

Global warming is the most pressing challenge facing the world today.

Claims about solutions or policies: These are claims that argue for or against a certain solution or policy approach to a problem. Example:

Instead of drilling for oil in Alaska we should be focusing on ways to reduce oil consumption, such as researching renewable energy sources.

Sources:

The Writing Lab & The OWL at Purdue and Purdue University.

Kibin, Essay Writing: https://www.kibin.com/essay-writing-blog/thesis-statement-examples/

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