

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is the foundation of your research report. Just as a building must have a foundation that is sturdy and strong, so must a research paper have a thesis statement that is strong and unites the various elements of your paper. **This thesis statement answers the essential question in a concise, clear and provable way.**

- All parts of the research paper must **explain, describe, and inform** about the thesis statement. A thesis statement is a claim that a reasonable person could argue. It should be **detailed, arguable, and specific**. A thesis statement must appear in the **first paragraph** of your research report. A thesis statement is **not** a topic sentence. It is more than a description of the topic; a thesis statement must take a stand.
- Your topic must be narrow. You may begin by asking yourself a question such as, “How was the Space Station built?” You can convert this question into a thesis statement such as, “Many designs for the Space Shuttle were theorized; only one was eventually chosen as the most likely to be successful.”

The following are examples of topic sentences and their revision to create a thesis statement.

Topic: Mt. St. Helens erupted in the 1980s. *Thesis:* The destruction caused by the eruption of Mt. St. Helens affected the surrounding areas and their economies for more than a decade.

Topic: Tupac Shakur is my favorite musical artist. *Thesis:* The music of Tupac Shakur was influenced by his upbringing, schooling, and early music experience.

Topic: Soccer is an exciting sport. *Thesis:* Soccer is as important in Europe and Central and South America as baseball is in the United States.

Topic: There is terrible pollution in the creeks and rivers of San Jose. *Thesis:* Local businesses should be required to clean up the creeks and rivers of San Jose so we do not suffer the long-term effects of pollution.

Topic: BMX biking is considered an extreme sport. *Thesis:* BMX biking has recently entered the area of extreme sports and has yet to be considered both legitimate and eligible for inclusion in the Olympics.