

Thesis Statements: The Bad and the Better

The thesis statement is the anchor of any research paper. It states what the paper is about and gives the reader a sense of direction — like a road map. It is typically the last sentence in your introduction. If written properly, a thesis statement should read like an outline in sentence form. Here are some examples of bad and better thesis statements.

Bad: The grey wolf is a timid creature that is being hunted and exterminated.

Better: Even though the grey wolf is a timid, gentle animal, it is being hunted and exterminated because humans wrongfully think it is a fierce killer.



Bad: Drinking too much alcohol is bad for your health.

Better: Excessive alcohol consumption adversely affects your health and may contribute to liver disease, heart disease, and weight gain.



Bad: Organ donors deserve money for their sacrifice.

Better: Due to the pain and lifestyle change they are willing to undergo to save another life, organ donors should be compensated with financial rewards.



Bad: Using the internet has a positive effect on people.

Better: The internet improves lives by instantly connecting people across the world, creating new friendships, and serving as a forum for exchanging ideas.



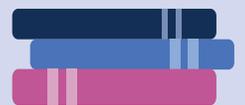
Bad: This paper will look at the advantages of school uniforms.

Better: School uniforms positively impact students and their parents by lowering clothing costs, reducing on-campus violence and bullying, and creating a unified school experience.



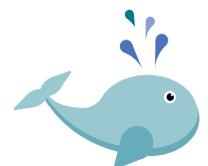
Bad: Encouraging children to read can help them build analytical skills.

Better: When children are encouraged to read, they can build good habits that foster comprehension skills, increase vocabulary, and expand their knowledge of new worlds.



Bad: Saving the whales should be a top priority.

Better: Saving the whales will have a positive effect on Earth's biological diversity, therefore maintaining our planet's health and ecosystems.



Bad: In this paper, I will explore popular childhood fairy tales.

Better: Fairy tales don't just make good bedtime stories, they also help explain the psychology of children.



Graphic Organizer: Writing the Three-Part Thesis Statement

A three-part thesis statement includes your three main pieces of evidence. Use this graphic organizer to plan your three-part thesis statement.

- 1) Pose a question or restate the question posed by the writing prompt.

Example: What are the primary causes of climate change?

- 2) Make a claim, or state your opinion (without using the personal pronoun "I"). Make sure to write your answer as a complete sentence, not a question or phrase.

Example: Climate change is caused primarily by human activities.

- 3) Write down the three main points (pieces of evidence) that you will explore in your paper. These will become topic sentences in the body of your essay.

1.

2.

3.

Examples:

1. *The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, releases carbon pollution into the atmosphere.*
2. *Deforestation means fewer trees exist to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air.*
3. *Farming contributes to climate change because livestock produce methane, a greenhouse gas.*

- 4) Now, put it all together.

Example Thesis: Climate change is caused by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and farming.

Note: Sometimes your thesis statement can be followed by an additional sentence that elaborates on your main points.