

Thesis Statement Worksheet

What is your topic?: _____

What background information does the reader need to know before you state your thesis?: _____

What is your working thesis statement?: _____

Test your thesis statement. Does your thesis statement:

- Make a claim that a reader can agree or disagree with?
- Reflect knowledge of the source material?
- Pick out an idea that can be defended in the space allowed?
- Limit the kinds of evidence you can use to defend it?

What evidence, examples, or arguments will you use to support the working thesis?: _____

Once you've written a draft, rewrite your thesis statement to improve it: _____

Thesis Statements Illustrated

Shakespeare was the world's greatest playwright.	trite, not defensible
The last scene in "Midsummer Night's Dream" showcases Shakespeare's ability to manipulate subtle linguistic differences among his characters for comic effect.	intriguing, has an edge
This essay will show that the North American Free Trade agreement was a disaster for the furniture industry of Canada.	emotional, vague
Neither neo-protectionism nor post-industrial theory explains the downswing of the Canadian furniture industry in 1988-1994. Data on productivity and profits, however, can be closely correlated with provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement that took effect in the same period.	gives context, reflects re-search, shows intent
The Dutch example shows that having an official policy on euthanasia just causes problems.	sweeping, minimizes opposition
Recent cases show that Dutch laws on euthanasia have not been able to deal adequately with issues involving technological interventions and unconscious patients.	focused, promises facts and analysis
Michael Dukakis lost the 1988 presidential election because he did not work hard enough after the Democratic National Convention.	simplistic, lacks detail
While Dukakis' "soft-on-crime" image hurt his chances in the 1988 election, his failure to campaign coast to coast after the Democratic National Convention was more significant in his eventual defeat.	anticipates reader reaction, promises debate
The occurrence of measles in medical settings is higher than nosocomial infections, rubella, pertussis, nfluenza, and nosocomial hepatitis B according to a survey of hospital records.	distracting detail, hard to follow, no context
In recent years, transmission of measles in hospitals has been described only rarely. New data suggest that the spread of measles in hospitals is more frequent than previously recognized.	shows purpose and context, promises new information of consequence