

Is your Thesis Statement Effective?

Here are some guidelines to check if you have an effective thesis statement for your essay.

GENERAL GUIDELINES



The thesis statement should be an answer to a question, NOT a question itself.

*This is **not** a thesis statement:*

“How to help students with writing assignments?”

Answer the question to create a thesis statement:

“As long as there are no writing consultants at the university, students will struggle with their writing assignments”.



The thesis statement should NOT be a statement of fact.

If have written a statement of fact or an assertion with which every reader is most likely to agree, then you do **not** have an effective thesis statement. Remember, that thesis statements should express your standpoint/attitude towards a topic.

Avoid writing:

“The cost of university education is high in Armenia”.

An effective thesis statement would be:

“University education is available to limited number of citizens in Armenia because of the high tuition costs”.



The thesis statement can make a RECOMMENDATION on a change.

Example:

AUA should suggest optional courses to students who want to learn a second foreign language.



The thesis statement can suggest a SOLUTION to a problem.

Example:

“AUA cafeteria should offer more fruits and vegetables to promote a healthy diet among students”.




The thesis statement can TAKE A POSITION in a debatable issue.

Example:

“Students should be required to do community service because it teaches them the value of helping others”.

This is a debatable issue, because other people can have an opposite opinion, stating that, for example, community service deprives students of precious time, which can be dedicated to learning.

HELPFUL TIPS


 **Avoid direct quoting; use your own words in thesis statements.**


 **Avoid phrases that express doubt and uncertainty.**

Examples would be: “It seems to me”, “in my opinion”, “perhaps”, “maybe”, etc.

 **Avoid merely writing the topic or the subject of your essay.**

 My subject is how to learn well.

 In this paper I will discuss the importance of learning well.

 I want to share some thoughts on how to improve your college grades.

 **Try to assert your point of view. Be specific.**

For example: **In this essay I will indicate how the participation in student clubs can help students to improve their grades.**

 **The thesis statement should suggest a STRUCTURE for your paper.**

*The thesis statement should be a **roadmap** to indicate the direction of your argument.*

The following thesis statement **clearly indicates** that the author finds peer review very helpful and it is obvious that he/she is going to write about *three main ideas* in the essay, which will build three separate paragraphs: 1. How does peer review make the learning process more open? 2. Peer review teaches students how to give constructive feedback, 3. Peer review fights the fear of sharing your work with other people.

Peer review should be mandatory at colleges, because it creates a supportive atmosphere among students, helps them to give constructive feedback, and fights the fear of sharing their work with other people.

If all of the above mentioned criteria are met, then you are very likely to have an effective thesis statement. Good luck!