

# How to build a clear thesis statement

## Main objectives:

In order to build a satisfactory thesis statement, you are required to develop **ONE SINGLE SENTENCE** that fulfills the following conditions:

- (i) It is a statement (i.e. what it expresses is either true or false).
- (ii) Its sentential structure is simple or non-compound (i.e. it has no subjunctive clause).

## Note:

- (i) The thesis statement to be built is only preliminary. Continual modifications of the statement are expected throughout the writing process.
- (ii) While working on the following steps, you are encouraged (although not required) to interact with a peer writer in order to make your writing process more effective and fruitful.
- (iii) After completing all the following steps, there is a checklist to make sure that you have completed all the required tasks. Please ask your peer writer to go through the checklist with you.

Step by step guidance:

- 1. Find a Noun or Noun Phrase that can best describe the main topic of your research paper.**

*e.g. Human Mind.*

- 2. Build a Sentence based on the noun or noun phrase by adding a verb or predicate.**

*e.g. Human mind is like a computer.*

- 3. Turn the sentence into a Question that is of interest to you.**

*e.g. Why is human mind like a computer?*

- 4. Give a Hypothetical Answer to the question.**

*e.g. Human mind is like a computer in many ways. But basically, they are the same in how they process symbol-like representations such as “2”, “=”, etc. Both of them are sensitive only to the syntactic properties, but not the semantic properties, of the symbols.*

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## 5. Summarize the Hypothetical Answer into just One Sentence.

*e.g. Human mind is like a computer in the way they process symbol-like representations.*

## 6. Modify the one-sentence thesis statement until it expresses a Clear Relation between the sentence's Subject and Predicate.

*e.g. Human mind and computer are basically the same in the way they process symbol-like representations.*

## 7. Highlight and eliminate the Ambiguities tainted with the subject and predicate of the thesis statement.

*e.g. Human mind and computer are basically the same in the way they process symbol-like representations.*

## 8. A preliminary thesis statement is formed.

*e.g. Human thinking and computational operations work in basically the same way when they process linguistic symbols.*

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## Thesis Statement Check List

*The following check list helps to identify if your main research idea is written in the form of a thesis statement.*

- (1) Is your research idea written in one sentence? If not, why can't it?
- (2) Does the sentence in (1) have a truth-value; i.e. can it be true or false?
- (3) Can the sentence be objectively verifiable; i.e. verifiable from a third-person point of view?

*The following check list helps to identify if your thesis statement is a clear and simple one.*

- (4) Does your thesis statement have a subject and predicate?
- (5) Can you easily identify the relation between the subject and predicate? If not, why not?
- (6) Do you think that the relation between the subject and predicate is straightforward? If not, why not?

*The following check list helps to identify if your thesis statement is a good one.*

- (7) Is your thesis statement trivial, in the sense that no one would care to disagree with it?
- (8) Is your thesis statement broad, in the sense that some of its vocabularies have a very broad meaning?
- (9) Does it contain words or phrases that are ambiguous in meaning? (Note that it is okay to use a word or phrase that has multiple meanings. The ambiguity is caused because the reader cannot clearly see which one of the meanings is intended by the author).