

T H E S I S

A Thesis is

your answer to the question that your paper is exploring, a clear, specific position on a specific issue, the main point you're trying to make or argue, your opinion about a specific issue or question

Remember: the type of thesis you write depends on your specific assignment and controlling purpose—*there is no one-size-fits-all formula*. When in doubt, check with your instructor.

1) Identify Your Topic

Topics are broad, general categories. Either your instructor gives you a topic, or you need to find a topic of your own.

Examples: influential person, online social networking, teenagers and tattoos, alternative energy.

2) Ask a Question

Your paper should explore a more specific, controversial issue within the general topic. Identify your specific issue, and then ask a question about it.

Examples: Who in your life has influenced you the most? What are the effects of online social networking? Why do teenagers get tattoos? Is wind power a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest?

3) Answer the Question

Your answer to the issue question is your thesis. Your answer should be controversial (reasonable people might disagree with you).

Examples: My high school basketball coach was the most influential person in my life. Online social networking has several negative effects. Teenagers get tattoos for several important reasons. Wind power is not a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest.

A Thesis Statement with Forecast

A thesis statement with forecast is a thesis statement with reasons attached to it. Reasons are more specific claims that support your thesis. *Readers want to know why they should accept your answer to the issue question*. You need to give them a few good reasons for your answer. When you attach your reasons to your thesis, you create a forecast or roadmap that tells your reader what they can expect to see in your argument.

1) Identify Your Reasons

My basketball coach was the most influential person in my life *because* she 1) was a good friend, 2) motivated me, 3) and made me work hard.

Teenagers get tattoos for several important reasons, *including* 1) expressing their individuality and 2) creating something permanent in a rapidly changing world.

Wind power is not a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest *because* 1) it's unreliable, 2) it has design problems, and 3) the environmental impact would be tremendous

2) Attach Your Reasons to Your Thesis

My basketball coach was the most influential person in my life *because* she was a good friend, motivated me, and made me work hard.

Teenagers get tattoos for several important reasons, *including* expressing their individuality and creating something permanent in a rapidly changing world.

Wind power is not a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest *because* it is unreliable, there are design problems, and the environmental impact would be tremendous.

Develop Your Thesis with Forecast and Tension

Tension: *Other people* may have *answers* to your issue question that are *different* from your answer. You should acknowledge these opposing or alternative arguments in your argument. Opposing and/or alternative answers give tension to your thesis.

First, create Tension:

Dependent word* + opposing view(s)

While most people might say that their parents were the most influential people in their lives,

Even though most parents fear that teenagers get tattoos only to mutilate their bodies and anger their parents,

Although wind power has many advantages, such as its low carbon footprint and its potential for creating new jobs,

Second, Add Your Thesis Statement with Forecast:

my basketball coach was the most influential person in my life because she was a good friend, motivated me, and made me work hard.

teenagers get tattoos for several important reasons, such as expressing their individuality and creating something permanent in a rapidly changing world.

wind power is not a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest because it is unreliable, there are design problems, and the environmental impact would be tremendous.

Third, the result is a **Thesis Statement with Forecast and Tension**:

While most people might say that their parents were the most influential people in their lives, my basketball coach was the most influential person in my life because she was a good friend, motivated me, and made me work hard.

Even though most parents fear that teenagers get tattoos only to mutilate their bodies and anger their parents, the truth is that teenagers get tattoos for several important reasons, including expressing their individuality and creating something permanent in a rapidly changing world.

Although wind power has many advantages, it is not a viable energy source for the Pacific Northwest because it is unreliable, there are design problems, and the environmental impact would be tremendous.

This handout was created by the Writing Centers at YVC.

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