

Crafting a Thesis



WHAT IS A THESIS?

A **thesis** statement sums up the central idea and purpose of the research paper in **one declarative sentence that:**

- focuses on one well-defined idea
- makes an argument capable of being supported using **controls**
- acts as a mini-outline to prepare the reader for the body of the paper
- appears as the last sentence of the introduction and is echoed in the conclusion
- avoids first person pronouns *I, me, my, our* and second person pronouns *you* and *your*

Thesis = central idea + controls or supports using parallel structure

Graffiti deserves merit as a form of personal validation, social commentary, and artistic expression.

The central idea is to argue that graffiti has positive aspects. The writer will prove this in three ways which will control or structure the paper into three parts:

1. The merits of graffiti as a form of personal validation
2. The merits of graffiti as a type of social commentary
3. The merits of graffiti as art

Example from drama

Bad: *Grease* at Toby's Dinner Theatre was a spectacular performance.

Better: An exciting plot, harmonious musical members, and outstanding staging combined to create a spectacular performance of *Grease* at Toby's Dinner Theatre.

Example from science

Bad: Animal cloning is cool.

Better: Cloning of animals could improve animal livestock and advance medical research.

CRAFTING THE THESIS USING PARALLEL CONTROLS

The controls or supports of a thesis should be written using parallel structure. Arrange the control with the strongest support last.

Nouns	Hemingway's stories introduced a new prose style by employing short <i>sentences</i> , strong Anglo-Saxon <i>words</i> , and extensive <i>dialogue</i> .
Verbs	School uniforms effectively <i>reduce</i> family clothing costs, <i>promote</i> social equality, and <i>diminish</i> discipline problems.
Adjectives	Consumers should boycott SUV's because they pose <i>financial</i> , <i>environmental</i> , and <i>safety</i> problems.
Prepositions	Gangs provide members <i>with a surrogate family</i> and <i>with a social hierarchy</i> .
Adverbs	Limiting presidents to one six-year term could benefit the country <i>financially</i> , <i>politically</i> , and <i>ideologically</i> .
Infinitive Phrases	Prostitution should be legalized <i>to reduce sexually transmitted diseases</i> , <i>to prevent unnecessary criminal and legal proceedings</i> , and <i>to create taxable revenue</i> .
Clauses	Professional athletes deserve high salaries <i>because they are entertainers</i> , <i>they incur the risk of injuries</i> , and <i>they have short careers</i> .

Controls form the basis for your note taking. Your controls should be the slugs on the note cards.