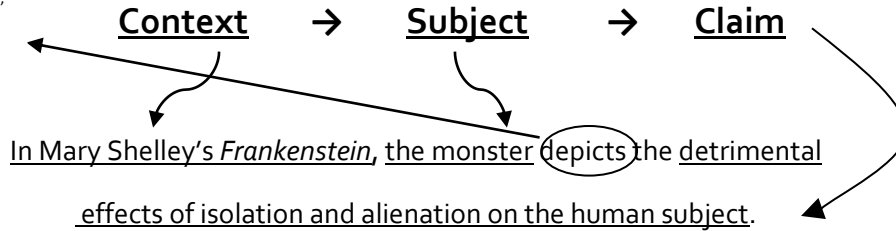


Creating Effective Argumentative Thesis Statements

A thesis is the foundation of an academic paper that is alive with good critical thinking skills. The term "thesis" comes from the Greek word for "putting" or "position." A thesis statement then is your *position* or *argument* about a subject. It is your promise or "cue" to the reader about what you are going to say in your paper.

A strong, active verb is a hallmark of an effective thesis. Ideally, verbs should express actions, processes, or relationships.

Basic formula for writing a thesis statement:



Your thesis should say...

- Why is this significant?
- Who cares about it?
- What is your point?

A thesis statement *should*:

- Have a context, subject and a claim
- Be able to be objectively proven
- Be debatable
- Reveal a perceptive point

A thesis statement *should not*:

- Be self-evident
- Be a statement of fact
- Be a statement of summary
- Be a statement of a plan

Common Thesis Statement Construction Errors and Revisions

No Perceptive Point:

Original: Schizophrenia patients present as having limited typical emotional responses.

Revised: Patients with schizophrenia present as having limited typical emotional responses, often helping to identify accompanying symptoms of the illness such as paranoia and delusions.

Self-Evident Statement:

Original: Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* is a tragic love story.

Revised: Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* presents the view that love redefines the social order.

Statement of Fact:

Original: Computers have changed the world.

Revised: Most people believe that computers are a welcomed change to modern life, but ironically they have increased rather than decreased the amount of time we spend at work.

Statement of Summary:

Original: Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* presents the horrors of war.

Revised: Steven Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan* argues that the horrors of war bring out the goodness of humans.

Thesis Statements

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