Building a Powerful Thesis

A **thesis statement** is your clear position on a topic that you will prove in an essay, speech, or presentation. Practice with crafting sample thesis statements on different topics will prepare you for more effective writing.

ASSIGNMENT:

Write a thesis statement for each of the three topics below. Each thesis should state your position and list three pieces of evidence you could use for support.

- **Topic 1:** The way students dress affects/does not affect their academic performance.
- **Topic 2:** Social media is/is not beneficial to the mental health of teenagers.
- **Topic 3:** Cyber security should/should not be managed by the federal government.

Remember:
An effective thesis statement should meet these criteria:

- It must be a clear statement, not a question.
- It must take a debatable stance (state something you will prove)
- It must be powerfully worded

***Note** that authors sometimes choose to briefly list their evidence in their thesis statement.

PROCESS AND EXAMPLES:

The following steps will guide you through the process of creating a powerful thesis statement using as an example topic the effects of computer screen time on the health of teenagers.

Example topic research question: Does too much screen time have a negative effect on the health of teenagers?

A – Write an "I believe" statement.

Ask yourself the following question: What do I believe and want to prove? Once you can explain what you believe and want to prove verbally, write it as an "I believe" statement.

Example – I believe that too much screen time has a negative effect on the health of teenagers.

B – Remove the "I believe" portion. The thesis must be able to stand on its own.

Example – Too much screen time has a negative effect on the health of teenagers.

This sentence now passes the first two parts of the requirement for a thesis, as it gives the topic of the essay and what the essay will prove. However, it does not meet the final requirement: the thesis needs to also be powerfully worded.

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C – Reword the statement with more powerful language.

Once you have your basic thesis statement, go back and add or change the language as needed to make it debatable and more powerful. The more powerfully you word your thesis statement, the more your reader will want to read your paper.

Example – **Spending too much time in front of computer screens (including mobile devices) has a negative effect on adolescent health.**

D – Include a brief list of the evidence you will use to prove your thesis (optional).

When you have reworded your thesis statement, briefly list the pieces of evidence you will use to prove your thesis.

Example – **Spending too much time in front of computer screens (including mobile devices) has a negative effect on adolescent health, contributing to sleep problems, obesity, and diminished eyesight.**

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