

DEVELOPING A THESIS STATEMENT



WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT? A thesis statement is typically a one-sentence statement that explains the purpose of your paper. The thesis should be clear, understandable, simple, and relevant. It should appear in your introductory paragraph and will usually be the last sentence of that paragraph.

A thesis statement SHOULD NOT be:

- **An observation:** *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is about a man with split personalities.
- **A Question:** Does Robert Lewis Stevenson explore the duality of man in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*?
- **Two sides of an argument:** Some believe that Stevenson is using Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as symbols of society, but others believe they are representing man's internal struggle.

A thesis statement SHOULD:

- Choose a side
- Contain one main idea
- Be specific
- A good example: Robert Lewis Stevenson uses character development and setting in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to represent the duality inherent in Victorian society.

How to write a thesis statement:

Brainstorm questions about your topic. For example, is Stevenson implying something about society in this text? Or what do the character(s) of Jekyll and Hyde symbolize?

Pick a question and answer it. Example: Stevenson is implying that Victorian society is dualistic.

Tweak your answer into a fully-formed statement including a preview of the proof of your argument.

Examples of thesis statements:

Hunger and poverty persist in Appalachia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.

The inclusion of death in children's literature can be beneficial: by presenting death as an integral part of the life experience, young readers can begin to understand and cope with any loss they will face in the future.

With the predominance of Christianity in this part of the world, it is easy to view Heaven as a Judeo-Christian idea, but throughout history and around the world there have been many religious portrayals of Heaven, and even within the branches of Christianity there are theological differences regarding Heaven.