



Writing a Thesis Statement

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The **thesis statement** is an essential part of an essay introduction, and it is very important that you know where to put it and how to write it.

Getting it wrong could very likely **reduce your IELTS score** as it could affect the coherency of your essay and if it's an opinion essay, it may mean that your opinion is not clear.

They are a crucial part of writing an introduction.

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What is a thesis statement?

Very basically, it tells the person reading your essay **what will be in it**. It may also **give your opinion** if the question asks you for this.

It is the last sentence of your introduction.

Don't get it mixed up with the topic of your essay – this is usually at the beginning of your introduction.

How do I write a thesis statement?

In order to make it effective, you must have first identified the task of the essay. If you are unsure about this, check out this lesson on [identifying the task](#).

The task is **what you have to do**, and is usually at the **end of the rubric**. For example,



look at this IELTS essay question:

As global trade increases, many goods including those we use on a daily basis are produced in other countries and transported long distances.

Do the benefits of this trend *outweigh the drawbacks?

What you have to do (the task) is explain whether you think, overall, an increase in the production of goods in other countries and their subsequent transportation over long distances is more **advantageous** or **disadvantageous**.

So your essay is obviously going to be **discussing the advantages and disadvantages** of this issue, and this is what needs to be made clear in your thesis statement.

It is also an opinion essay as it is asking you to make a decision on whether you think there are more advantages or disadvantages. So you need to make this clear as well.

Here is an example introduction, with the thesis in bold:

*Due to the increase in global trade, many of the goods that we consume every day are made in a different country and then transported over a long distance in order to reach us. **In my opinion, this trend has more disadvantages than advantages.***

You would then go on to write about the advantages and disadvantages of global trade (**focusing more on the disadvantages** as you think there are more of these).

*Just a quick note on the word '**outweigh**'. This word often confuses students and they end up writing a thesis statement opinion that contradicts what they write in the essay.

The simple answer – **don't use the word!** It is just asking you if there are more advantages than disadvantages. So just state what you think in the thesis without using the word, as in the example.

How does the thesis statement change with different types of question?

We will now look at how thesis statements can vary with different question types. However, you should not try to learn set phrases or sentences to fit certain essays.

There are some broad types of essay question that are common to see, but they can all vary slightly.

The golden rule is to **always read the question very carefully** (*never rush this as you may not fully answer the question*) and work out what you have to do.

Your thesis statement will then follow on from this, depending on what you have decided you need to write about in order to answer the question.

So below are some suggestions of what you could do for certain common kinds of essay question, but this is not to say these are right and other ways are wrong. There are numerous ways to write good thesis statements and these are just possibilities.

1) Writing about Two Opinions

Some questions ask you specifically to **discuss two opinions** and to **give your opinion**.

Some people think that young children should be allowed to do paid work, while others think that this should be illegal.

Discuss both opinions and give your opinion.

There are various ways you could choose to write an introduction and thesis for this.

Example 1

You could begin by paraphrasing the two opinions, then stating in the thesis what you will do:

Some people believe that it is acceptable for young children to undertake jobs that they are paid for, whereas others believe that this is wrong and should be illegal. This essay will discuss both sides of the issue.

This is quite simplistic but it makes it very clear what you are going to do.

You will obviously need to give your opinion as well in the essay, but stating this in the thesis ("This essay will discuss both sides of the issue and then give my opinion") sounds awkward so it is better without it.

Here is a sample essay with a similar thesis statement. **Example 2**

Another possible way to do it is by having a sentence to introduce the topic first, and then paraphrasing the two opinions to make them your thesis:

*At present, more and more young children are becoming involved in paid work. **Whilst some people are of the opinion that this is an entirely acceptable practice, others believe that this is completely wrong and should be made illegal.***

This is fine as your thesis will match with your essay – you go on to discuss the first opinion and then the second one.

Here is another model essay using such a thesis statement. **Example 3**

Or of course you could modify this slightly to include your opinion:

*At present, more and more young children are becoming involved in paid work. **Whilst some people are of the opinion that this is an entirely acceptable practice, I believe that this is completely wrong and should be made illegal.***

As long as you go on to discuss both sides of the argument, this is fine.

2) Agreeing or Disagreeing

Another type of question is when you are asked to **agree or disagree** with one opinion.

Currently there is a trend towards the use of alternative forms of medicine. However, at best these methods are ineffective, and at worst they may be dangerous.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement?

For this type of question, you need to state what your opinion is in the thesis statement.

Although you could feasibly do this in the conclusion, I think it is better to do it first so it is clear to someone reading the essay what your opinion is upfront. It is not wrong though to put it in the conclusion – this is your choice.

Your thesis statement here will depend on whether you agree, disagree, or partly agree. Here are some examples of each:

A thesis statement that **agrees with the opinion**:

*Alternative medicine is not new. It is accepted that it pre-dates conventional medicine and it is still used by many people all over the world. **However, I strongly believe that this form of medicine does not work and is possibly a danger to those using it.***

A thesis statement that **disagrees with the opinion**:

*Alternative medicine is not new. It is accepted that it pre-dates conventional medicine and it is still used by many people all over the world. **I am unconvinced that it is dangerous, and feel that both alternative and conventional medicine can be useful.***

A thesis statement that **partly agrees with the opinion**:

*Alternative medicine is not new. It is accepted that it pre-dates conventional medicine and it is still used by many people all over the world. **I agree that for certain conditions this type of medicine is ineffective and could even be dangerous, but for some illnesses it is a good alternative choice.***

These examples illustrate why it is important to analyze the question carefully and brainstorm your ideas first so you have a clear idea of what you will be writing and what your opinion is.

Here is a model essay answering the question.

3) Other Essays

Some other essays may not ask you for your opinion specifically, but may ask you to discuss, for example, **problems and solutions, causes and effects, advantages and disadvantages**.

If you are asked to do this, then you should just clearly state that you will be discussing these two things in your essay. Here are some examples:

Problems and solutions:

Overpopulation of urban areas has led to numerous problems.

Identify one or two serious ones and suggest ways that governments and individuals can tackle these problems.

Sample thesis in bold:

*Many countries of the world are currently experiencing problems caused by rapidly growing populations in urban areas. **Both governments and individuals have a duty to find ways to overcome these problems.***

View model answer for this essay. **Causes and Effects:**

The percentage of overweight children in western society has increased by almost 20% in the last ten years.

Discuss the causes and effects of this disturbing trend.

Sample thesis in bold:

*Over the last ten years, Western societies have seen close to a 20% rise in the number of children who are overweight. **This essay will discuss some reasons why this has occurred and examine the consequences of this worrying trend.***

View model answer for this essay. **Advantages and Disadvantages:**

In order to solve traffic problems, governments should tax private car owners heavily and use the money to improve public transportation.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of such a solution?

Sample thesis in bold:

*Traffic congestion in many cities around the world is severe. One possible solution to this problem is to impose heavy taxes on car drivers and use this money to make public transport better. **This essay will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of such a measure.***

View model answer for this essay.

This lesson has provided you with some broad guidance on writing a thesis statement for different types of essay.

It is important to stress again though that questions can vary so you must always analyze if carefully and identify exactly what you need to do and what should therefore be in your thesis statement.

Remember, a thesis statement is just telling the reader **what the focus of your essay is** and **giving your opinion** if necessary.

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