

Thesis Statements – Web Worksheet

By Nancy Armstrong

I. Functions and Purposes of a Thesis Statement

- To announce the topic to the reader
- To reflect a judgment about the topic
- To provide the reader with a blueprint for what is to come in the paper

II. Prewriting Techniques

- A. Word Map – use circles, etc. to show relation between ideas
- B. Scratch Outline – briefly highlight the main points of your paper
- C. List – list any and all ideas/items about your topic that you can think of
- D. Question & Answer– ask as many questions as you can think of
- E. Free-write – be the creator, not the editor of your work

- It is extremely helpful to do some type of prewriting activity as a way of figuring out what you do and do not know about the topic
- Prewriting allows you to develop a basic claim

III. Developing the Basic Claim – on the road to Thesis

- A. Broad vs. Narrow Thesis Statements
- B. Topic – Comment Approach

- There are several ways to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a thesis statement
- First, Broad Thesis Statements are claims that are vague, ambiguous or overreaching. These are claims that do not meet at least two of the 3 criteria above and/or attempt to address a topic with too many issues to deal with in the given writing assignment
- Second, Narrow Thesis Statements are claims that do not meet at least two of the 3 criteria above and/or are too specific and single-minded to be developed into a thorough essay
- Next, use the topic-comment approach to specifically identify what you believe to be your topic and the comment about that topic
- By isolating the topics from the comments, writers can evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the comments they are attempting to put forth
- Use the attached worksheet to practice these assessments

V. Generating a Working Thesis

- After practicing with the worksheet, practice developing your own thesis statement for any current writing assignment
- Use narrow/broad & topic/comment techniques to evaluate and revise thesis

VII. Finalizing the Thesis- visit a C.L.A.S.S. writing tutor to discuss your final draft

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Directions: For each of the following statements, identify whether the statement is strong, too narrow, or too broad. If the statement is too narrow or broad, rewrite it to fix the problem. (Answers are attached at the end of this worksheet.)

1. Media violence is harmful to society.
2. The death penalty is wrong.
3. School uniforms provide many benefits to students, parents and educators.
4. Technology has changed our lives.
5. Violent crime is up.
6. The recall election will do more harm than good.
7. I like my apartment.
8. Taking care of older pets can be challenging.
9. Participating in volunteer work is essential to the development of strong character.
10. The neighbor's cat is unfriendly.

Thesis Statement Worksheet – Answer Key

(Topics are underlined once; comments are not underlined.)

1. Media violence is harmful to society. ***Broad***

2. The death penalty is wrong. ***Broad***

3. School uniforms provide many benefits to students, parents and educators. ***Strong***

4. Technology has changed our lives. ***Broad***

5. Violent crime is up. ***Broad***

6. The recall election will do more harm than good. ***Broad***

7. I like my apartment. ***Narrow***

8. Taking care of older pets can be challenging. ***Broad***

9. Participating in volunteer work is essential to the development of strong character. ***Strong***

10. The neighbor's cat is unfriendly. ***Broad***