

Narrowing your topic and thesis statement

When you first receive an academic assignment, the task may seem overwhelming. Break the assignment down into steps and work through a careful process to give yourself a clear starting point to guide you through the successful completion of the task.

STEP 1: With a partner answer the following questions?

1. How do you narrow a topic for an essay? Put a tick to those that apply to you.
2. With your partner discuss the following techniques

	Mind-mapping
	Using index cards
	Brainstorming
	Freewriting
	Talking with classmates/ friends/ family about the topic
	Researching

9. How do you go about researching a topic?
10. Do you prepare an outline before you start to write? Why or why not?

Once you have narrowed your topic it is necessary to write a preliminary thesis statement.

Your thesis statement is the central idea of your paper. A strong thesis statement will answer your research question and let the reader know what the answer might be. To arrive at a thesis statement you can brainstorm, freewrite and list ideas in a response to your research question. From here you can write a thesis statement that clearly expresses your opinion about the issue you are addressing in your essay.

STEP 2: Read the definition of a thesis statement

A strong thesis statement:

- is specific and expresses a particular point of view.
- does not simply announce the topic, state a fact, or make a generalization about the topic.
- is the answer to a question, the solution to a problem, or a position on a debatable issue.
- is supportable with evidence, facts and expert opinions.
- frames the structure of your paper.
- is typically one sentence but can be two sentences as well.

STEP 3: Analyse the following thesis statements. In the comment section state if the thesis statement is *poor*, *good* or *strong*.

Thesis Statement	Analysis	Comments
This paper will examine pay inequity for women.		
Women in executive positions still lack pay equity.		
Pay inequity is wrong.		
Pay inequalities still exist in senior -level management positions, and having lower pay than men negatively affect women.		
While women's pay has risen since women entered the workforce in greater numbers in the mid-20 th century, pay inequities still exist in senior-level management positions, and having lower pay than men negatively affects their effectiveness as managers, their ability to manage work and family life, and their opportunities for further advancement.		