

6-2024

03 - Thesis Statement/Research Question Worksheet

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Recommended Citation

Leaman, Kristin B. and McGregor Boyle, E. C., "03 - Thesis Statement/Research Question Worksheet" (2024). *Annotated Bibliography Researched Argument Essay*. Paper 3.
<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iltabrae/3>

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Thesis Statement/Research Question Worksheet

Instructors, this worksheet can be provided to your students as a short writing assignment or in-class activity. If given as an in-class activity, provide time for them to work through this alone and then have them share out their ideas and answers in pairs or small groups. Circulate the room and visit groups during discussion to answer/ask questions.

From the *Norton Field Guide to Writing*, pp. 347-349:

“A thesis identifies the topic of a text along with the claim being made about it. A good thesis helps readers understand an essay. Working to create a sharp thesis can help you focus both your thinking and your writing.”

State your topic as a research question.

- First consider what questions you are trying to answer about your topic.
- What is the main question you want to answer?
- Why do you care about this? Why should your audience care?

Turn your research question into a position.

- Your thesis statement declares your position on the question you’re raising about the topic. What is your position?
- What is your answer to the question you posed above?
- Write out your answer.

Narrow your thesis statement.

- A good thesis statement is specific and shows your readers exactly what you will cover in your essay.
- Take a moment to ask yourself some “how,” “what,” and “why” questions about your thesis statement.
- At your table, share your thesis statements with your group. Ask each other questions about your thesis statements.
 - EX. “The internet negatively impacts high school students.” Very broad thesis statement. Questions to narrow:
 - Why does it negatively impact high school students?
 - How does it affect them negatively?
 - Are the negative impacts more severe in high school students than other populations?

- What specifically on the internet negatively impacts high school students? Social media? What social media platform? Anything else?
- Are some high school students more vulnerable than others?
- Is there a particular community within high school students on which you can focus to help narrow your thesis?

Qualify your thesis.

- Your thesis can be challenged and may not be unconditionally true. Consider your thesis statement and determine if you need to add terms such as “probably,” “mostly,” “very likely,” “often,” etc.
- Remember to closely and fairly consider the arguments against your thesis statement.

Introducing your thesis statement.

- Thesis statements are generally placed at the end of the introduction paragraph.
- You want a strong, attention-grabbing introduction that will lead into your thesis statement.
- Brainstorm ways in which you can introduce your thesis statement:
 - Statistics
 - Anecdote
 - Scenario
 - Case study
 - Other options?