

DEVELOPING THESIS STATEMENTS

Objectives

When you have finished this section, you will be able to

- identify the qualities of a good thesis statement
- develop/revise skills for crafting a thesis statement;
- prepare a thesis statement.

Resource List

- 1) How To Write a Thesis Statement:
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/thesis_statement.shtml
- 2) Thesis Statements:
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/thesis-statements/>
- 3) Developing a Thesis:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/616/02/>

Key Concepts

- Thesis statements
- Theses – strong versus weak theses

Procedure

Before Class:

Survey the websites provided in the Resource List above.

1. Explore **websites 1 to 3**. Find the reasons and steps for developing thesis statements. Study the examples of strong versus weak thesis statements, which are used to help you understand and identify the characteristics that make them either strong or weak. Compare the explanations and explore some of the exercises on these websites.
2. Explore other college or university sites that discuss thesis statements for clarification.
3. Bring one or two questions to class to ask your tutor during your next class and/or plan to visit the NUS Writing and Communication Hub for further assistance with writing thesis statements. For more information about the WCH, go to www.nus.edu.sg/celc/writinghub.
4. Do **Task A** (30 minutes).

In Class:

1. Do **Task B** (30 minutes).

After Class:

1. Consider the thesis statement you used in your Reader Response Draft 2. What were the strengths and weaknesses of your initial thesis statement? How might you refine it for your Reader Response Draft 3?

Tasks**A. Reflection and recording (30 minutes)**

1. Reflect on the key concepts of
 - thesis statements/theses,
 - strong versus weak theses;
 - controlling ideas
 - scope
 - clarity

Define or explain each of them in one or two sentences?

B. Evaluating Thesis Statements

Below are the descriptors which could be used to evaluate your thesis statements written for this course:

Descriptors For Reader Response Thesis Statement:				
<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>explicit thesis statement</i> – presents a clear stand, with a very specific controlling idea	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>explicit thesis statement</i> – presents a stand with a controlling idea, but may lack clarity	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>explicit thesis statement</i> – inadequate attempt to present a stand with a controlling idea	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>explicit thesis statement</i> – poor/no attempt to present a stand/controlling idea	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>explicit thesis statement</i> – no attempt to present a stand/controlling idea

Descriptors For Essay & Critical Reflection Thesis Statement:				
<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ clearly responds to the task,▪ with very specific controlling ideas and scope	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ responds fairly clearly to the task,▪ but may have lapses in controlling main ideas and scope	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ does not fully respond to the task▪ lacks clarity;▪ has no discernible controlling ideas with an unclear scope	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ does not respond to the task▪ has no discernible controlling ideas with an unclear scope	<i>explicit thesis statement</i> – <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ no thesis

1. With a partner, look online at Resource List item 1 - "How to Tell A Strong Thesis Statement from A Weak One." Study the examples of thesis statements and, using the descriptors above, discuss how each might be marked by a tutor and the reasons a tutor might give for each mark. (What is present or what is missing?) Be prepared to share your discussion with the class.