

The Introduction

The first paragraph of an essay, the introduction, must clearly state the main topic or idea, grab the reader's attention, and give an idea of how the topic will be developed.

The Thesis Statement

Thesis Sentence



what the essay is about



your own insight or assertion about the topic

The thesis statement is the most important part of an introduction. It tells the reader what the main topic of the essay is and what the writer has to say about that topic. Think of it as the topic sentence of the essay. **It is very important, though, that your thesis statement makes a point or an argument about the topic.** For example, the topic might be the British monarchy. However, you cannot write an essay simply on the British monarchy. For one thing, that is much too broad a topic. For another, this does not give you anything new or unique to say in your essay. Instead, you need to make a point *about* the British monarchy. For example, you might claim it is still meaningful for many Canadians.

Therefore, your thesis statement will consist of two parts.

The first part will state the topic:

Cats

The proposed curfew for teens

The second part will make a point about the topic:

*make better pets than dogs
is unfair, unworkable, and unconstitutional*

The rest of your essay will develop or prove your thesis. It will show how you came to this conclusion.

Thesis DOs and DON'Ts DO:

- Do be specific.
- Do narrow the topic.
- Do give yourself something to prove.
- Do put the thesis at the end of your introduction (usually).

DO NOT:

- Do not use a title for a thesis, for example, "Cats as pets." A title is often not a complete sentence. It is usually too general to be a thesis.
- Do not use a question for a thesis, for example, "Do cats make better pets than dogs?" You must make a statement that you will prove. You can use a question for the "hook," but you must give your answer to that question in your thesis statement.
- Do not state a fact for a thesis, for example, "Domestic cats have lived with humans for thousands of years." You need to say something of your own about the topic. The reader can look up facts in an encyclopaedia. He or she does not need to read your essay to find them.
- Do not tell the reader what you are going to do, for example, "I will prove that cats are better than dogs." This is a boring, unimaginative thesis statement.
- Do not have more than one topic in your thesis, for example, "Cats make good pets, and so do dogs." Your essay will lack unity and coherence.