

# Techniques of Writing

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# Composition

## Lesson Twenty-five: Thesis Statement

# Thesis Statement

Thesis statement

- Contains the central idea

e.g.,

Adam's love for motor-racing has made his life miserable.

Attending college can be very expensive.

Watching television five hours a day can cause health problems.

# Thesis Statement and Controlling Ideas

## Controlling ideas

- Provide the focus for the essay
- Serve as the road-map for the reader
- Guide the choice of strategies to develop the topic
- Reveal the opinion or attitude of the writer about the topic

# Examples of Thesis Statements with Controlling Ideas

The effects of rise in oil prices will slow down economic development.

Globalization of trade will spur economic development in both rich and poor countries.

Foreign students on a college campus contribute to the mosaic of student life.

Knowing English can be a passport to better job opportunities.

# Caution about Thesis Statement

Thesis Statement should

- be a complete sentence, e.g.,  
Students should have their representative in the governing council of the university.
- Express an opinion, attitude, or idea, e.g.,  
Cigarette smoking is an expensive habit.

# What Should not Be Part of Thesis Statement?

- Statement of fact, e.g.,  
The River Ganges flows in India.
- Religious beliefs  
X religion is better than Y religion.
- More than one idea  
Attending college in NY can be advantageous, and living in the city can offer me more opportunities to meet people.

# Breaking the Topic

Development requires the breaking of the main topic into sub-topics for paragraphs.

Asking relevant questions (what, when, where, why, and how) will generate enough sub-topics for development.

Thesis: NY has the best environment for me  
to live in.

Question to generate topics:

What makes NY a city with the best environment?

- Pollution-free environment
- Convenient transportation
- Affordable housing
- Modern health care
- Good educational facilities
- Better job opportunities
- Malls and shopping centers
- Low crime rate

# Choosing Topics

Among several topics generated, the most significant ones may be chosen for development, e.g.,

- Better job opportunities
- Affordable housing
- Good educational facilities
- Modern health care

# Choosing a Strategy

Strategy refers to the pattern of development, namely.,

- Illustration or example
- Comparison and contrast
- Classification
- Process
- Cause and effect

# Example One

Thesis Statement:

Watching soccer games is not a waste of time.

Question to be asked:

Why "watching soccer games" is not a waste of time? or

How "watching soccer games" can be beneficial?

- generates camaraderie.
- provides entertainment
- Inculcates the spirit of give and take

# Example Two

Thesis Statement:

Spoken English is a challenge for non-English speaking students.

Question to be asked:

Why “spoken English” is a challenge for non-English speaking students?

- Sense of embarrassment
- Accent difficult to acquire
- Large vocabulary

# Example Three

Thesis Statement:

Programs on PBS are entertaining.

Question to be asked:

Why “programs on PBS” are entertaining?

- Popular dramas for the families
- Latest news from around the world
- Interviews highlighting health, economy, education, etc.,