Writing Thesis Statements

After pre-writing based on your assignment and topic, creating a **working thesis statement** is the most important part of establishing the theme and structure of your essay.

1) **Pre-Writing** (brainstorm ideas, conduct background research, create an outline)
2) ⭐ **WORKING THESIS STATEMENT** ⭐
3) **Drafting** (versions of the paper as content evolves)
4**)** **Revising/Proofreading** (final checks for grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.)

A "working" thesis statement is flexible and can change if you find your ideas and paper heading in a different direction than you anticipated.

A THESIS STATEMENT IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE...

♦ It declares your argument or point by **stating your claim or position**, **clarifies your purpose** for writing, and **establishes important themes** or relationships.

♦ It provides a roadmap for your readers, **identifying the topic** (subject) and **defining the focus**, **scope**, and **boundaries** of the topic in your paper.

A THESIS STATEMENT USUALLY...

♦ Is somewhere in your introduction, generally near the end. This is not the only correct place for a thesis, but many readers expect the thesis statement to come at the end of the introduction in academic essays.

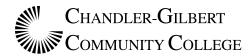♦ Is 1-3 sentences in length, depending on the assignment.

DEVELOPING YOUR WORKING THESIS STATEMENT

To get started, answer **WHO**, **WHAT**, **WHY**, **WHEN**, **WHERE**, and **HOW** about your topic**.** Incorporate the responses that are crucial to your point and purpose into the thesis statement (the other responses may still be appropriate background to provide your readers in the introduction or another paragraph).

For Example
Topic: Writing center usage (this topic needs a lot of narrowing. After pre-writing, this is one direction to go)

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WHO	College students, particularly traditional, just-out-of-high-school—both audience and topic focus
WHAT	It's important for students to use their writing center resources
WHY	In addition to developing writing skills, using the writing center engenders qualities and skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, time management, initiative, openness to feedback, etc.
WHEN	During undergraduate college years and into post-college employment period
WHERE	United States college campus writing centers and general job market
HOW	Present qualitative and quantitative research to demonstrate how Writing Center visits can develop qualities/skills beyond writing and connect to examples and data about what employers value in employees

A possible thesis statement from these answers might be the following:

WHO WHAT WHERE WHEN

Students who take advantage of writing center resources during their college careers position themselves for greater success after college by developing characteristics employers seek. WHY HOW
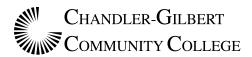

CREATING YOUR WORKING THESIS STATEMENT

Experiment with these strategies for writing a working thesis, keeping in mind that they are a starting point, and you will likely need to revise the wording to create a clear, sophisticated thesis statement.

Write a purpose statement: *Based on the assignment, write one sentence that describes your intention behind writing the paper. Try starting with "In this paper, I want to show my readers…because…"*

Question to Assertion*: If your assignment asks a specific question(s) or you have been asked to design a research question as part of the assignment, turn the question into an assertive answer, adding reasons why this assertion is true.*

Main Idea: *In one sentence, summarize the main point you want a reader to take away from your paper.*

List ideas: *Make a list of the ideas you hope to include in the essay, then try to determine what relationships the ideas have to one another.*

Formula: *Start with fill-in-the-blank statement formulas that can then be refined into a thesis. For example,*

(1) Most people think/assume _____ about [my subject], but [another group/author] believes _____ because _____. My position is _____ because _____.

(2) I want to persuade my readers that _____.

(3) I want to describe/analyze _____ to show my readers _____.

(4) I want to compare _____ with _____ to show my readers _____.