Tips for Writing Your Thesis Statement

From the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab):

1. Determine what kind of paper you are writing:
   
   • An **analytical** paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts, evaluates the issue or idea, and presents this breakdown and evaluation to the audience.
   
   • An **expository** (explanatory) paper explains something to the audience.
   
   • An **argumentative** paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with specific evidence. The claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. The goal of the argumentative paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided.

   (If you are writing a text that does not fall under these three categories (ex. a narrative), a thesis statement somewhere in the first paragraph could still be helpful to your reader.)

2. **Your thesis statement should be specific—it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should be supported with specific evidence.**

3. The thesis statement usually appears at the end of the first paragraph of a paper.

4. Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.

**Thesis Statement Examples**

Example of an **analytical thesis statement**:

An analysis of the college admission process reveals one challenge facing counselors: accepting students with high test scores or students with strong extracurricular backgrounds.
The paper that follows should:

• explain the analysis of the college admission process
• explain the challenge facing admissions counselors

Example of an **expository (explanatory) thesis statement:**

The life of the typical college student is characterized by time spent studying, attending class, and socializing with peers.

The paper that follows should:

• explain how students spend their time studying, attending class, and socializing with peers

Example of an **argumentative thesis statement:**

High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.

The paper that follows should:

present an argument and give evidence to support the claim that students should pursue community projects before entering college.