**THESIS STATEMENTS:**

**DEFINITON:** a statement that tells readers the main points of your paper. Think of it as the answer to the question your paper explores.

**LOCATON:** end of the introduction

**CHARACTERISTICS:**

* Your distinct standpoint on the subject
* A brief summary of the main arguments
* A roadmap for the paper

**HOW IT RELATES TO THE REST OF THE PAPER:**

**A THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD:**

* Answer the questions ‘how’ and/or ‘why’
* Provide the logic of the paper
* Cover the entire paper

**THE REST OF THE PAPER SHOULD:**

* Prove that the thesis statement is correct
* Repeat a rephrased thesis statement in the conclusion

**A STRONG THESIS STATEMENT IS**

* DISPUTABLE: not obvious; some readers can disagree
* FOCUSED: Not too broad; your position is clear
* RELEVANT: Not boring; readers won’t say ‘so what’?

**3 QUESTIONS ON EVALUATING A THESIS STATEMENT:**

* Could someone argue for or against it?
* Does the author argue for it?
* Will readers want to read more about it?

**5 GROUPS OF WORDS NOT TO USE IN A THESIS STATEMENT:**

* **Personal pronouns**: I, you, we
* **Uncertain Qualifiers:** might, perhaps, maybe
* **Extreme words:** all, everything, none, always, never
* **Vague words:** some, somewhat, kind of
* **Obvious Exaggerations:** life-saving, best of the best…

**6 GROUPS OF MUST-USE WORDS:**

* **Sources of Information:** studies reveal, research shows
* **Realistic Views**: many, significant, most
* **Characteristics:** primarily, frequently, often
* **Clear Explanations:** because, thus, since, for, due to
* **Relationships:** demonstrate, illustrate, tendency, contribute to
* **Active Verbs:** demonstrate, illustrate, identify, present, inform, reveal, show, express, justify…

**FORMULA OF A THESIS STATEMENT:**

**MAIN CLAIM (your specific standpoint)**

**+**

**SUBTOPIC 1 (to be provided in paragraph 1)**

**+**

**SUBTOPIC 2 (to be provided in paragraph 2)**

**+**

**SUBTOPIC 3(to be provided in paragraph 3)**

**EXAMPLES:**

There are some negative and positive aspects to starting high school at a later time.

**WEAK:** vague and fails to take a stand

High school students are more successful when school starts later in the morning.

**BETTER:** Takes a stand, but is not specific

Later start times for high school students significantly improve academic progress and attendance.

**STRONG:** Specific and takes a stand

Dante was an Italian poet and philosopher who wrote in the Middle Ages.

**WEAK:** Fact only

Dante was one of the greatest poets of the Middle Ages.

**BETTER:** Takes a stand, but is too BROAD

Dante’s masterful use of biblical allegory makes *The Divine Comedy* one of the most important literary contributions of the Middle Ages.

**STRONG:** Specific and takes a stand