Types of Thesis Statements

A thesis statement is the core of your paper, introducing the purpose of what you are writing and your stance on the topic. It's important that your thesis statement is supportable, as in it can be backed up with evidence, and that all your main points connect back to it.

Characteristics of a good thesis:

1. Clarity - Your thesis should clearly give the purpose and claim of your paper.

2. Specificity - Your argument and examples should be specific.

3. Debatable and answerable.

4. Direction - Your thesis should give the reader an idea of what they will encounter in your essay.

Argumentative Thesis

An argumentative thesis makes a claim and advocates for a specific perspective. The writer states a potential stance on a topic and provides reasoning as to why readers should agree with that perspective.

Example 1:
Foreign aid allocation should not be based solely on a country's Gross Domestic Product, as state-based indicators like GDP don't account for the material conditions of communities and individuals, and extractive industries like oil, though lucrative, may not improve the material conditions of that country's citizens.

Example 2:
Even though they might reject the supervision, in reality it is important to supervise the online behavior of children to make sure they are making safe, smart decisions.

Speaking and Writing Center [1]: Foreign aid allocation is your topic for this thesis. Often the topic will address the who, what, when, or where of your paper; in this case it addresses the what. While these are a good place to start, addressing only those questions will not give you a full thesis because you need to have some point that you are trying to argue or prove in the paper, which simply stating a topic will not usually address sufficiently.

Speaking and Writing Center [2]: This is your stance or position for your argument.

Speaking and Writing Center [3]: These are your reasons for your stance. You should be able to back them up with evidence to strengthen your argument.

Speaking and Writing Center [4]: This is your position for your argument based on your topic.

Speaking and Writing Center [5]: Here is the topic of your argument. Note that it can be incorporated in the middle of your thesis.

Speaking and Writing Center [6]: This is your reasoning, explaining why you are arguing for your stated position.

Analytical Thesis

An analytical thesis evaluates a topic. You are stating what you analyzed about a topic and what conclusion you reached based on those analyses.

Example 1:
In *The Great Gatsby*, the first person narration style describing the actions of the main character allows the audience to see the difference between the public perception of Gatsby and his true motivations and goals.

Example 2:
In the hit song "Blank Space," Taylor Swift makes use of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, asyndeton, and antithesis in order to create a satirical persona as a response to public criticism.

Explanatory Thesis

An explanatory thesis describes a topic. You are stating key facts about your topic that you will be discussing in your paper as well as making it clear why this topic needs to be explained.

Example 1:
Dependency Theory is an international relations theory that claims underdevelopment in countries is a result of economic exploitation by developed countries, offering an alternative to neoliberal theories of development for countries that are concerned about their economic independence.

Example 2:
The current trend in treatment for congestive heart failure combines nutrition with more traditional medical interventions which may allow patients to remain independent longer.

Speaking and Writing Center [7]: This is your topic that you are basing your analysis on.

Speaking and Writing Center [8]: This is what you specifically analyzed about the topic in question. However, it's not enough to stop here, with what was analyzed because this isn't arguable-- no one is going to dispute the use of first person.

Speaking and Writing Center [9]: This is the point that you are trying to make about the topic and the use of the first person narration style.

Speaking and Writing Center [10]: Here is your topic that you are analyzing in your paper.

Speaking and Writing Center [11]: Here is what you analyzed from your topic and what you will be discussing in your paper. Again, it's not enough to discuss examples of these devices in her songs; what the reader wants to know is the purpose of those rhetorical devices and what effect they have on an interpretation of Swift's music.

Speaking and Writing Center [12]: Here is the conclusion you reached from your analysis. You can approach forming a conclusion by asking yourself, "How is what I analyzed significant?" or "Why was it incorporated in my topic?"

Speaking and Writing Center [13]: Here is your topic that you will be explaining in your paper.

Speaking and Writing Center [14]: These are the key facts about your topic that help contextualize your paper and introduce the topic for your reader if they are unfamiliar with it.

Speaking and Writing Center [15]: Here, you are explaining why your topic and its aspects matter; as in, why are you writing a paper on it? Why should we care?

Speaking and Writing Center [16]: This is your topic for your paper.

Speaking and Writing Center [17]: Here are some key facts about the topic that will help the reader understand what you're discussing.

Speaking and Writing Center [18]: This is why your topic matters or why it is significant.

Cause and Effect

A cause and effect thesis demonstrates how actions or events contribute to specific outcomes. You are stating factors that impact the outcome of a situation.

Example 1:

The most important lifestyle change one can make to be more sustainable is to use the belongings one already has instead of buying new things in order to reduce over-consumption.

Example 2:

The United States' prioritization of business and security interests during the Cold War led the country to behave in ways that contradicted American values of democracy and liberty. This was expressed in the United States' covert operations, foreign aid allocation, and direct military action.

Comparison

A comparison thesis explains the similarities and differences for different parts of a topic. You are comparing and contrasting multiple components in a topic.

Example:

In the media coverage of the 1909 New York Shirtwaist Strike, the dramatic difference in how strikers were portrayed by newspapers versus union publications illustrates how the public discourse about labor action was also a dispute over changing conceptions of femininity in the early 20th century.

Speaking and Writing Center [19]: This is the topic of your paper.

Speaking and Writing Center [20]: This is the factor that you are arguing has an impact, the "cause" of your thesis.

Speaking and Writing Center [21]: This is the outcome you are arguing that the factors stated will impact, the "effect" of your thesis.

Speaking and Writing Center [22]: A thesis can be two sentences, but it should still be concise and it should be clear where the thesis starts and ends.

Speaking and Writing Center [23]: This is the topic of this thesis statement.

Speaking and Writing Center [24]: This is the effect that you are trying to argue.

Speaking and Writing Center [25]: These are the causes of the effect mentioned above. Note that, in this thesis statement, they can be listed after the effect, as long as the thesis stays clear and concise.

Speaking and Writing Center [26]: This is the topic of the paper.

Speaking and Writing Center [27]: This sets up what the compare-contrast aspect of the paper is. In this paper, it is the newspapers versus the union publications. As with an analysis paper, it's not enough to simply enumerate the differences; to be a thesis, this must also make a a point about the differences and their significance.

Speaking and Writing Center [28]: This is the takeaway. It gives a line of reasoning for what will specifically be looked in the paper.