

## ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

### Academic Writing: Essay Thesis (AW: ET)

Almost all assignments, no matter how complicated, can be condensed into one sentence: a single statement called a **thesis**. A thesis is not a fact or observation. Facts are used within the paper to support your thesis. The thesis statement should be a sentence, found in the introduction, that you spend some considerable amount of time on after you have unpacked the assignment question and carried out some reading on the topic. This first thesis statement will only be a draft as it may change or develop as you continue to read and increase your knowledge on the topic.

#### Learn about:

- developing a thesis statement
- writing a thesis

See other **Info Sheets** about academic essays, essay planning, components of the paragraph, quoting, connecting ideas.

#### Your thesis needs to be:

1. Debatable
2. Focused
3. Relevant

There are a number of steps to follow that will assist you to develop a strong thesis.

**To ensure your thesis statement is well developed follow these tips.**

**To be debatable** it should be written as a declaration that provides the reader with a viewpoint or your position on a particular topic. Someone should be able to argue a different position. The thesis may also reject or modify an opposing position provided by others.

**A focused thesis** provides the main idea of the essay and explains what you intend to discuss. It answers a specific question and explains why you have the opinion that you provide. This sentence controls what you include as evidence and assists you to structure the entire argument.

**To be significant** or relevant a thesis should show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.

**A thesis is placed in the introduction paragraph and is often followed by a brief summary** of the main arguments in one or two sentences; often near the end of the introduction. We call this summary a map; it assists the reader to follow the direction of your argument.

### Arriving at the point where a strong thesis can be written

1. Examine the essay task and find a problem or controversial issue and think about it. Develop a specific question that could be asked and answered on this topic. A thesis is not a fact or observation. Facts are used within the paper to support your thesis.

Does increased video game playing impact negatively on children?

2. Consider what your answer might be if you were asked to answer it promptly. Take a firm position that can be focused.

Video game playing teaches children useful skills and inspires learning.

3. Then consider 'both sides', or, the varying opinions held on your topic by yourself and others and add arguments to your point of view. A strong thesis can show that the two ideas are related. Clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like *because*, *since*, *so*, *although*, *unless*, and *however*.

Although there is an assumption that computer and video games cause various problems, there is much evidence that demonstrates their captivating interactive power has the potential to inspire learning, improve coordination and visual skills.

This thinking and argument development can be carried out more effectively if you carry out an analysis on the topic.

- Brainstorm what you know about the topic and add to this as you do some initial reading.
- This will assist you to break down a topic into parts, discovering connections among the parts.
- It assists you to consider evidence for your thesis and counter arguments.
- It also assists you to see what might be involved but then to narrow the subject to a more specific and manageable topic.
- This brainstorming will lead you to develop a thesis or opinion.

### More info

The Writing Center at The University of North Carolina provides a handout exploring strong and weak thesis statements <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/thesis-statements/>

The University of Canberra resource titled, *Writing an essay: ten steps to a strong essay explains how to establish a thesis statement*

<http://learnonline.canberra.edu.au/mod/book/view.php?id=178430&chapterid=269>