**Definition:**

A **thesis statement** is a sentence that:

- makes a promise about the scope, purpose, and direction of the paper.

- captures the whole argument in one sentence, usually near the end of the introduction.

- is focused and specific enough to be proven within the paper.

- provides a framework for the paper.

**Working and Final Theses:**

There is an important distinction between a **working** and a **final** thesis.

A **working thesis** guides the writer's investigation into the subject and suggests questions, problems, and strategies. It is useful in early drafts.

A **final thesis** should be present in the final draft. It generally comes late in the writing process, and it is the result of revisions made to the working thesis.
What does a thesis do?:

For the writer, the working thesis statement:
- serves as a planning tool.
- helps the writer determine the paper's focus.
- becomes a reference point for all topic sentences in support of the argument.
- anticipates questions about the topic.

For the reader, the thesis statement:
- serves as a "map" to follow through the paper.
- keeps the reader focused on the argument.
- engages the reader in the argument.
- offers enough detail for the reader to grasp the argument.

Topic -vs.- Argument:

A topic introduces the subject of an essay. An argument takes the topic further by taking a stand and giving reasons for the stance. Here is an example:

A key issue in America today is wealth and poverty. This is a topic. Here are two better ways to state an argument about this topic:

Through hard work, millions of Americans who were born poor have achieved prosperity for themselves and their families; today, America is an economically mobile country.

Once we tried to help poor Americans; today, though we are richer than ever before, we blame the poor for their poverty and enact policies that will keep them poor.

Thesis Worksheet:

In one word, what is the topic of your paper? ______________

Which aspect(s) of this topic are you going to talk about? Be specific.

What are you going to prove about this topic? What is your argument?

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How can your argument be proven? Convince your reader that your argument is sound, using solid evidence.

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At this point, you know your topic, your argument, and your evidence for your argument. Put your argument with your evidence, and this will serve as your working thesis.

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