

3. THESIS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Constructing a thesis boils down to two key steps.

Step 1. State what your claim is (the claim, or the "what").

Step 2. Tell why your claim is valid (the premise, or the "why").

For example, if you were trying to persuade your parents to extend your curfew, you would begin by stating what your claim is:

My curfew should be extended by an hour.

The next step would be to tell your parents why your claim is valid. For example:

I have never violated my curfew.

I have never acted irresponsibly while out at night.

I have always called home to inform you of any changes in my evening plans.

Put together into a single sentence, your thesis contains one claim and three premises:

My curfew should be extended by one hour because I have never violated my curfew, I have never acted irresponsibly while out at night, and I have always called home to inform you of any changes in my evening plans.

Armed with a solid thesis, you now have a foundation for your essay. As the writer, you know where you are going. In addition, your reader has a clear idea of the road ahead. Now you are prepared to put the flesh on the bare bones of your argument.

Directions

- I. Select one of the following questions.
 1. Who is the most influential living person? What makes the person influential?
 2. What are the qualities that make an effective leader? Why are these qualities so important?
 3. How have computers impacted our society? Has the overall impact been positive or negative?
 4. What is a product you would endorse? What makes it so great?
 5. What is something you would say is overrated or underrated? Why?
 6. What is a key quality to success in today's world? Why is this quality so important?
 7. What specific change would you make to your community, nation, or world to improve life for everyone? Why would this change be effective?
- II. Brainstorm at least eight possible answers on a separate piece of paper.
- III. Once you have at least eight ideas, construct a thesis that contains a claim and at least three supporting premises.