

Five Questions to Strengthen Your Thesis Statement

YOUR THESIS STATEMENT HERE:

01. Does my thesis directly relate to the assignment?

Assignment question:
Which theorist do you believe was most influential in shaping modern ideas about child development?

Does not answer the question:
Vygotsky, Piaget, and Erikson have all had an important influence in shaping modern ideas about child development.

Answers the question:
Among the many child development theorists, Vygotsky has been the most influential in shaping modern ideas about child development because he developed the concept of the “zone of proximal development.”

02. Have I identified a specific topic? (is it manageable?)

Not specific enough:
Free trade agreements have served Canada well.

More specific:
The North American Free Trade Agreement should be considered a success for Canada because it has created jobs, increased foreign investment, and lowered prices of everyday goods.

03. Is it actually an argument? (Could someone disagree with me?)

Not arguable (no one would disagree):
Watson and Crick discovered the structure of DNA in the 1950s.

Arguable:
Although Watson and Crick discovered the structure of DNA, the largely uncredited contributions of scientist Rosalind Franklin were crucial to their success.

04. Does it answer the “so what” question?

Not clear why the argument matters:
Shoplifting is wrong.
(So what? Why should we care?)

Importance of the argument is clear:
Shoplifting has negative economic effects, not only for retailers, but also for innocent consumers.
(We should care because of the economic impact on retailers and consumers).

05. Have I indicated, either within the thesis or in a nearby sentence, what the organization of the paper will be?

Thesis with no preview of organization:
This essay argues that the risks of privatizing Ontario’s public sector services outweigh the benefits.

Thesis with preview of organization:
This essay argues that the risks of privatizing Ontario’s public sector services outweigh the benefits. Specifically, I will show how private corporations do not always act in the public interest, how privatization could limit the power of the province and municipalities, and how privatization could lead to a decline in service quality and efficiency.