

YOUR THESIS

Argumentative Thesis Statement

In an argumentative paper, you are making a claim about a topic and justifying this claim with reasons and evidence. This claim could be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation. However, this claim must be a statement that people could possibly disagree with, because the goal of your paper is to convince your audience that your claim is true based on your presentation of your reasons and evidence.

Example of thesis for **Native American tribe, the Sioux**:

The United States was justified in removing the Sioux Indians from their lands onto reservations because they refused to share their land and threatened the lives of U.S. citizens.

A reader who encountered this thesis would expect to be presented with an argument and evidence that the Sioux Indians refused to compromise on the sharing of their land and that they threatened the lives of U.S. citizens.

Evaluation Thesis Statement

An evaluation thesis gives a rating to a certain person, event, or concept from a historical perspective.

Example for suffragist, **Susan B. Anthony**

Some people consider people as heroes because they were brave. Others think of people as heroes because they helped people in need. Of course, there are many definitions for a Hero, but to me, people who are heroic stand up for what they believe in and don't back down no matter what people tell them or say. I believe that Susan B. Anthony did just this. She stood up for Women's Right to vote and fought until the very end.

A reader who encountered this thesis would expect to be presented with an argument and evidence that Susan B. Anthony encountered opposition to her quest for the woman's right to vote and yet refused to give up.

How to Tell a Strong Thesis Sentence

How to Tell a Strong Thesis Statement from a Weak One.

1. A strong thesis statement takes some sort of stand.

Remember that your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject. Here are two thesis statements:

There are some negative and positive aspects to U.S. government's policy towards the Cherokees.

This is a weak thesis statement. First, it fails to take a stand. Second, the phrase *negative and positive aspects* is vague.

Because the U.S. government constantly changed the terms of treaties with the Sioux to benefit the U.S., the Indian policy for the Sioux was unjust and unconstitutional.

This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand, and because it's specific.

2. A strong thesis statement justifies discussion, because it provokes controversy.

The United States had many treaties with the Sioux.

This is a weak thesis because it merely states an observation. Your readers won't be "tantalized" to read the essay. It sounds too boring

A good strategy for creating a strong thesis is to show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.

3. A strong thesis statement expresses one main idea.

Readers need to be able to see that your paper has one main point. If your thesis statement expresses more than one idea, then you might confuse your readers about the subject of your paper. For example:

The U.S. made many treaties and wars with the Plains Indians, such as the Sioux, and Blackfeet Indians.

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about the Sioux or the Blackfeet Indians, or about treaties or Indian wars.

Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like *because*, *since*, *so*, *although*, *unless*, and *however*.

4. A strong thesis statement is specific.

A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about, and will help you keep your paper to a manageable topic.

The Indian policy for the Sioux was unjust and unconstitutional.

This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, *Indian policy for the Sioux is very general and will demand a lot more research and writing*. Second, *unjust and unconstitutional* is vague (why unjust?). You should be able to identify specific causes and effects. A revised thesis might look like this:

Because the U.S. government constantly changed the terms of treaties with the Sioux to benefit the U.S., the Indian policy for the Sioux was unjust and unconstitutional.

This is a strong thesis statement because it narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic (what changed in the treaties that benefited the U.S.), and it also identifies the specific cause for the unjust Indian policy (to benefit only the U.S.).