



Crafting a Strong Thesis

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Importance

The thesis statement is arguably the most significant piece of an essay.

Generally speaking, most essays are built on a foundation laid by the thesis.

As a result, understanding the purpose and mechanics behind a strong thesis is paramount to any student with a writing assignment,



Intended Audience

This knowledge, how to craft a strong thesis statement, is beneficial to any tutor that covers writing, regardless of subject. Thesis statements are the nucleus for almost all essays, across every subject.

Students often believe that strong thesis statements are outside their understanding, or as we would say “Zone of Proximal Development.” Through this tool, I’ve broken down the Thesis statement into manageable sections in effort to make thesis statements easier to understand without sacrificing their complexity.

We'll Build a Thesis as We Go

Example Prompt

What is the significance behind the interconnectivity of Pink Floyd's album *The Wall*?

How do we Answer it?

My approach is a multistep process that I've nicknamed "The Big Three." Through it we can answer the prompt appropriately with a powerful thesis.

A hand holding a lit sparkler against a dark, splattered background. The sparkler is bright and glowing, with many small sparks radiating outwards. The background is dark with white splatters and a circular pattern of dots.

The Big Three

Ideally, Thesis statements answer three questions
What, How, and Why

What?

What Are You Arguing?

Essentially, this question is square one. Usually, this is a direct answer to the prompt. Many students assume that the answer to this question is all they need for their thesis statement.

The best way to get a tutee to establish their “What” would be through socratic questioning, fishing for what they intend to argue in the essay

How does this apply to the sample Prompt?

My “What” would then be something along the lines of:

The interconnectivity of Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* is used to further develop the storytelling elements present in the album.

How?

How will you back your argument up?

This is probably the easiest part of the thesis statement. Basically, the goal of answering “How” is to explain what factors you intend to use to support your claim. This usually comes in the form of a blueprint, or groundwork for the upcoming body paragraphs.

Because this part of the Thesis acts as a blueprint, it's important to make sure the tutee understands what they want their subclaims to be.

Continuing with our Prompt

My “How” would then sound something like this:

This can be seen through the recurring guitar riff, the three versions of the song *Another Brick in the Wall*, and through the overall theme of the album.

Why?

Why is this important?

More aptly, why should the reader care? Admittedly, this could be the hardest part of the thesis. It's important to understand that there's a lesson to be learned in the essay, and that should be made clear in the thesis.

This concept can be confusing to tutees. In order to help them understand, I tend to emphasize the perspective of the reader. I might go as far as to ask, "As a reader, why do I care about reading your essay?"

Application for our prompt

Understanding Pink Floyd's brilliant use of interconnectivity throughout *The Walk* could advance the art of storytelling.

Okay, Now Let's Take a Look at Our Example

What?

The interconnectivity of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* is used to further develop the storytelling elements present in the album.

How?

This can be seen through the recurring guitar riff, the three versions of the song *Another Brick in the Wall*, and through the overall theme of the album.

Why?

Understanding Pink Floyd's brilliant use of interconnectivity throughout *The Wall* could advance the art of storytelling.

How do I help the Student if they Don't understand?

If the student can answer all three questions independently, then bring them together, they understand.

If they don't understand, appeal to their learning style.

Visual learner? Write the three questions down, and fill it out as the student answers your questions

Audio learner? Ask them the questions aloud. Press their response for as much detail as you can

Tactile Learner? Make them write it out as you go. Give them the empty "What How Why" and let them fill in the blanks.

Tutoring Methods Applied Here

Socratic Questioning

Most of the info you need to teach this process to a tutee can come through literal questions. The “Big Three” questions can be asked to the tutee as pointed questions to fish a strong thesis out of them.

Self Regulated Learning

By understanding that they can build any thesis out of this method, It allows the tutee to apply it in future essays, and as a result improve their future writing.

Learning Types

There are a variety of approaches to cover this topic for each learning style, as covered earlier.

Teach Back

It’s important to let the tutee explain back to you the role and significance behind every step, so they can demonstrate their understanding.



And That's How you Craft a Strong Thesis.