

# Thesis Statements: The Bad and the Better

The thesis statement is the anchor of any research paper. It states what the paper is about and gives the reader a sense of direction — like a road map. It is typically the last sentence in your introduction. If written properly, a thesis statement should read like an outline in sentence form. Here are some examples of bad and better thesis statements.



**Bad:** The grey wolf is a timid creature that is being hunted and exterminated.

**Better:** Even though the grey wolf is a timid, gentle animal, it is being hunted and exterminated because humans wrongfully think it is a fierce killer.



**Bad:** Drinking too much alcohol is bad for your health.

**Better:** Excessive alcohol consumption adversely affects your health and may contribute to liver disease, heart disease, and weight gain.



**Bad:** Organ donors deserve money for their sacrifice.

**Better:** Due to the pain and lifestyle change they are willing to undergo to save another life, organ donors should be compensated with financial rewards.



**Bad:** Using the internet has a positive effect on people.

**Better:** The internet improves lives by instantly connecting people across the world, creating new friendships, and serving as a forum for exchanging ideas.



**Bad:** This paper will look at the advantages of school uniforms.

**Better:** School uniforms positively impact students and their parents by lowering clothing costs, reducing on-campus violence and bullying, and creating a unified school experience.



**Bad:** Encouraging children to read can help them build analytical skills.

**Better:** When children are encouraged to read, they can build good habits that foster comprehension skills, increase vocabulary, and expand their knowledge of new worlds.



**Bad:** Saving the whales should be a top priority.

**Better:** Saving the whales will have a positive effect on Earth's biological diversity, therefore maintaining our planet's health and ecosystems.



**Bad:** In this paper, I will explore popular childhood fairy tales.

**Better:** Fairy tales don't just make good bedtime stories, they also help explain the psychology of children.

# Graphic Organizer: Writing the Three-Part Thesis Statement

A three-part thesis statement includes your three main pieces of evidence.  
Use this graphic organizer to plan your three-part thesis statement.

## 1. Pose a question or restate the question posed by the writing prompt.

*Example: What are the primary causes of climate change?*

## 2. Make a claim, or state your opinion (without using the personal pronoun “I”). Make sure to write your answer as a complete sentence, not a question or phrase.

*Example: Climate change is caused primarily by human activities.*

## 3. Write down the three main points (pieces of evidence) that you will explore in your paper. These will become topic sentences in the body of your essay.

1.

2.

3.

*Examples:*

- 1. The burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, releases carbon pollution into the atmosphere.*
- 2. Deforestation means fewer trees exist to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air.*
- 3. Farming contributes to climate change because livestock produce methane, a greenhouse gas.*

## 4. Now, put it all together.

*Example Thesis: Climate change is caused by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation and farming.*

**Note:** Sometimes your thesis statement can be followed by an additional sentence that elaborates on your main points.