



THESIS AND CONCLUDING STATEMENTS

What is a Thesis Statement?

A statement, which appears in the introduction, and tells what an essay is *about* (its subject) and what the writer's *viewpoint* on that subject is.

1. A Thesis Statement is a sentence

A sentence contains (at the very least) a subject (a noun – a person, place, thing or idea) and a verb (an action word – a doing or being word).

Not a Thesis Statement: New Zealand's Unemployment Benefit System and the Marginalisation of the poor.

This contains a subject (underlined), but it doesn't *do* anything. There is no verb. This could be a title, but not a thesis statement.

Thesis Statement: New Zealand's Unemployment Benefit System **contributes** to the marginalisation of the poor.

The subject is underlined. The verb is **bold**.

2. A Thesis Statement expresses a viewpoint; that is, the writer's opinion, attitude or idea.

A Thesis Statement could be disagreed with. A Thesis Statement is something that needs to be explained or proved. It does not just express a fact.

Not Thesis Statements:

This paper will discuss the effects of radiation. (This simply announces the topic. It is a fact. It does not provide the author's viewpoint on the topic.)

There are many arguments for and against the adoption of the MMP system. (Again, this is a fact. It could not be disagreed with. It is not an arguable point.)

Thesis Statements:

The effects of radiation are often unpredictable.

Though many problems exist, the adoption of the MMP system will ultimately improve the equity of New Zealand's political system.



Related resources:
Structure of an Essay
Structure of a Paragraph

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Examples of Thesis statements (examples are underlined)

HUMAN FACTORS: A MAJOR CAUSE OF FAMINE (Tetsuya Okita)

According to recent research, the number of famines does not appear to decrease with the advance of technology. Most people believe that famines are caused by droughts or floods, factors beyond human control. But they are wrong. Droughts and floods cause famines when coupled with man-assisted disasters. I believe that a major cause of famine is human factors such as civil wars and government mismanagement.

First, civil wars can cause famines. Take a country like the Sudan, which experienced drought for a few years. When the civil war broke out, millions of Sudanese died of starvation. This is because the United Nations (UN) and other food suppliers were cut off by the war. For example, the Red Cross suspended all flights to Sudan because all the landing in areas held by the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA) had been bombed by the government (Prendergast 32). However, in Botswana, which faced a ten-year drought in the 1980s ("The Horn is Empty" 38), nobody died of starvation, mainly because the country did not have a civil war. Relief food could be transported easily by road or by air.

Second, government mismanagement can be a major cause of famine. For example, Ethiopia could actually feed itself, since more than half of the country's arable land is being cultivated. But...

What is a Concluding Statement?

A sentence which appears at the end of an essay and reflects the Thesis Statement, but this time as a conclusion.

1. A Concluding Statement contains key words from the Thesis Statement

Thesis Statement

New Zealand's Unemployment Benefit System contributes to the marginalisation of the poor.

Concluding Statement

Unless the Unemployment Benefit System is significantly altered to address these issues, it will continue to create a marginalised underclass in New Zealand.

Note also that the word "underclass" conveys the meaning "of the poor" from the thesis statement.

2. A Concluding Statement does not merely restate the Thesis Statement. It draws a conclusion based on the evidence presented in the body of the essay.

Thesis Statement

The effects of radiation are often unpredictable.

Concluding Statement

This essay has shown then, how environmental conditions, the source of the radiation and remedial actions taken can significantly alter the effects of radiation.

Though many problems exist, the adoption of the MMP system will ultimately improve the equity of New Zealand's political system.

The problems facing MMP, then, will be outweighed by the benefits to women, Maori and other currently under-represented groups in New Zealand.