

Writing Guide: **Thesis Statement**

1. A **thesis statement** is a one-sentence statement of the main idea of an essay. It answers the question “What are you trying to prove?”
2. Often the thesis is stated explicitly at the end of the introductory paragraph(s) of the essay.
3. A good thesis statement contains both a topic and a focus:

Thesis = Topic + Focus

The **topic** is the subject you’re writing about. The **focus** is what you want to prove to the reader about that subject.

In the following thesis statement, the topic is underlined, and *the focus is italicized*:

Attending Washtenaw Community College *provides students with skills to survive in the modern world.*

4. Here are some other thesis statements:
 - A. Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth are Shakespeare’s greatest tragic heroes.
 - B. America’s high divorce rate, though disturbing to many people, may actually signal several positive changes in society.
 - C. My first date with Chris remains in my memory as the best night of my life.
 - D. Exercise offers three obvious benefits: a stronger body, a healthier mind, and a longer life.
 - E. Aggressive research on alternative energy sources should begin immediately.
 - F. Despite the fact that both are Republicans, Rush Limbaugh and John McCain are very different politicians.