

THESIS STATEMENT

What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement is a sentence which:

- is usually found in the middle or end of an introduction.
- sums up the central point of your paper.
- should answer the question or respond to the task set out in the assessment instructions.
- is a clear and concise statement which describes the scope, purpose and direction of your paper.
- serves as a preview of the position you will take in the paper. The main point in each body paragraph should relate back to this statement.

How to write a thesis statement

Formulating the thesis statement takes careful consideration. It requires researching your topic, collecting evidence and forming an argument based on facts. It is likely that you will need to adjust your thesis statement during the writing process in order to ensure it represents the main point communicated in your paper.

Step 1: Unpacking the assessment question

As a thesis statement is your response to the assessment question, you need to carefully analyse the assignment task to understand what it is asking you to address in your paper.

Step 2: Initial research and first thesis statement

Once you have a good understanding of all the components of the assessment task, you can begin your research in order to find supporting evidence for the arguments you will be making in your paper. After some research, as your arguments begin to take shape, you can formulate a “working thesis statement”, which is your initial answer to the assessment question.

Step 3: Further research and refined thesis statement

As you continue your research and further develop the body of your paper, you can refine and adjust your thesis statement to reflect the content of your evolving body paragraphs. At the end of the writing process, check that the final version of your thesis statement clearly matches all the arguments you have put forward in your paper.

Example

Step 1: Carefully examine the assessment question, highlighting key terms and limiting factors

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly in Western countries. Critically examine some of the explanations given for this phenomenon.

Here we have identified our topic, scope and the assessment task.

Step 2: Begin researching relevant sources and formulate a working thesis statement

“The main factors influencing the rise in divorce rates are changes in laws, social and economic behaviours.”

Here we have identified some explanations but have not fully formed our argument as to which of these factors are most significant in driving the changes.

Step 3: Refine thesis statement after establishing our main argument in the body of the paper.

“While legal changes in this area have facilitated divorce, the underlying explanation for rising divorce rates is actually changes to social and economic behaviours within society.”

Here we have adjusted our working thesis statement to better reflect the conclusions we have reached in our paper. This is the final version of our thesis statement.

How do I know if my thesis statement is strong?

With a good thesis statement, your answer should be yes to all the following questions:

- Did I answer the assessment question?
- Did I make my position on the issue clear?
- Is my thesis statement specific enough?
- Can I support claims both for and against my position?
- Does the content of my essay support my thesis statement?

Sample Introduction

Essay question:

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly in Western countries. Critically analyse some of the different explanations given for this phenomenon.

Introduction:

A major change that has occurred in Western society in the last 20 years is an increased incidence of divorce. In the past, divorce was a relatively rare occurrence, whereas in recent times it has become quite commonplace. An important issue for sociologists, and indeed for all society, is why these changes in marital patterns have occurred. Two possible explanations for the divorce phenomenon are changes to divorce laws and broader socio-economic change. While legal changes in this area have facilitated divorce, the underlying explanation for rising divorce rates is actually changes to social and economic behaviour within society.

Introduction of topic

Signposting
Thesis statement

Essay question:

How useful are the concepts of cognitive and emotional intelligence in modern organisations?

Introduction:

Intelligence is traditionally defined as "the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience" (Gottfredson, 1997, p. 5). Professional development focused on strengthening different types of intelligence can help improve staff performance. Two types of intelligence relevant to modern organisations today are emotional intelligence (EQ) and cognitive intelligence (CI). This essay will critically examine these two types of intelligence and their application in the field of organisational behaviour. This analysis will attest that both EQ and CI are essential in the management of modern organisations.

Introduction of topic and definitions

Signposting
Thesis statement

Helpful Resources

Essay Structure: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/essay>

Summarising and paraphrasing: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/summarising-and-paraphrasing>

Cohesion and linking ideas: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/cohesion-linking-ideas-1>