Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is a single, clear, focused sentence that communicates your paper’s central focus or argument. It should give your audience a quick and easy-to-follow idea of your position on the topic of the paper. The thesis statement also offers a guide to how your paper is organized.

There are several key elements for a thesis statement:

- Can’t be a simple fact
- Not an opinion
- Must be arguable
- Can’t be a question

Not a good thesis statement:

- *Star Wars* came out in 1977 (fact; not arguable)
- Is *Star Wars* the best movie of all time? (question; not direct claim)
- *Star Wars* is my favorite movie (opinion, simple, can’t be argued)

A good thesis statement

- *Star Wars* is a great movie because it complicates the hero archetype outlined by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Thesis statements can also be “open” (implicit) or “closed” (explicit). Implicit thesis statements do not include a who, what, when, why, or how, while closed thesis statements do.

Examples:

Open: Nuclear energy is too dangerous to be used as a source of electrical energy.

Closed: Nuclear energy is too dangerous to be used as a source of electrical energy because of its detrimental effect on the environment.