Give Your Paper Direction: Developing a Strong Thesis Statement

Presented by
Joni Boone

February 11, 2011

This is the recording link for this workshop:
http://khe2.acrobat.com/p42885351/
Learning Objectives

• Define “thesis statement”
• List qualities of a strong thesis statement
• Recognize a path to thesis development
• Recognize types of thesis statements according to purpose
What is a thesis statement? No mystery.

Central point
Main idea
Claim
To maintain focus, a thesis will

• Be a complete sentence (or two)
• Identify the topic
• Make an assertion about the topic
Despite the fast-paced, technology-based lifestyles of many Americans, there seems to be an insatiable draw to the world of agriculture. With the proliferation of cooking shows and even networks devoted to cooking, Americans are surrounded by a culture encouraging healthy food choices, organic produce, and whole foods. Grocery stores have entire sections devoted to organic foods. They also tag produce as “locally grown” to attract socially conscious shoppers. Perhaps many of today’s Americans long for a connection to the soil – getting their hands dirty, nurturing plants, and cultivating living things. Or perhaps they feel socially responsible to support their surrounding communities – the small farmers and local rural initiatives. Community supported agriculture (CSA) feeds into these desires of today’s health and social conscious individuals. CSA is a cooperative experience where individuals invest in local farmers who then grow, harvest, and distribute foods back to the investors. CSA is more successful than ever in American urban centers because it helps local economies, provides healthy food options, and satisfies a human desire for a connection to the earth.
Do you need a thesis statement before writing?

Can your thesis statement change as you write?
Know your assignment
Prewrite
See what’s out there
Create research question
Create working thesis
Write paper
Refine thesis as needed
Your Assignment – Read it and re-read it

What is the purpose – to inform or persuade?

Does the assignment suggest a rhetorical mode?

What is the suggested length?

Are you encouraged to narrow the topic to a particular discipline or subject?
Discover what you already know about the topic

- Brainstorm
- Freewrite
- Cube

Use pre-writing strategies to research your own experiences and knowledge on the subject
See what’s out there

Preliminary Research
Define a Research question

Are there other factors to consider regarding video games and violent behavior, such as family environment, individual personalities, and other media?

How do traditional and alternative healthcare institutions in the United States tackle the problem of childhood obesity?

What ethics should guide photojournalists in war zones?
Working Informative Thesis

- Reports information
- Objective
- Not persuasive
Examples of informative thesis statements

The effect of television violence on ratings has varied from decade to decade and depends on what society at large views as acceptable in each era.

Governments of the United States and Great Britain are tackling the issue of childhood obesity in different ways according to the established traditions of their health care systems.
Persuasive Thesis

• The topic is a debatable issue
• The thesis articulates a stance on the issue
• Words like *should*, *must*, or *needs* are often used
Examples of a persuasive thesis

Photojournalists should always be embedded with military troops for their own protection.

College athletes perform a valuable service for their schools and should be paid for their performance.

Due to the population shift in the Eastern Boulevard area, the Jones County school district needs to be restructured to accommodate expanding populations.
Three-Point Thesis

• The issue or topic
• The writer’s assertion, point, or stance on the topic
• Plan of development
The parents of children with a genetic predisposition towards obesity can help their children avoid obesity by **controlling the children’s diet**, **providing regular exercise**, and **promoting an active lifestyle**.

Though many people believe that expelling students is the best way to eliminate bullying from high schools, high school administrators can help reduce instances of bullying by **instituting a zero-tolerance policy for fighting**, **holding alternative dispute resolution classes as a regular part of the curriculum**, and **establishing a teen court program**.

Community Supported Agriculture is more successful than ever in American urban centers because it **helps local economies**, **provides healthy food options**, and **enhances the current local food movement trend**.
Want to share your thesis statement?
Questions?
How to Access the Writing Center

[Image of a webpage with the KU Writing Center logo and a screenshot of the Kaplan University website, showing various tabs and sections such as My Grades, Library, and Academic Advising.]
How to Access the Writing Center
Contact Information

• Workshops are recorded and recording links, with an accompanying PowerPoint or a handout, are posted on the Writing Center Workshops page 1-2 business days after a workshop has taken place.

• For information about the Writing Center workshop series, please contact Diane Martinez at dmartinez@kaplan.edu

• For information about this particular workshop, please contact Joni Boone at JBoone2@kaplan.edu