

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is a complete sentence that contains one MAIN IDEA. This idea controls the content of the entire essay. To create a thesis statement, use the S+D+3R Method.

Subject + Direction + 3Reasons = Thesis

Subject = your topic

(The subject is who or what your paper is going to be about.)

Direction = your thoughts / opinion about your topic

(The direction tells the reader what you want to say about your subject.)

3 Reasons = 3 reasons why you think this about your topic - general examples
(The three reasons are examples or points you want to make about your topic.)

Reason #1 = Body Paragraph #1 - contain specific examples
Reason #2 = Body Paragraph #2
Reason #3 = Body Paragraph #3

Some Examples:

A strong thesis statement would read something like this:

In the memoir Night by Elie Wiesel, many of the inmates transition from humans to animals as a result of their lack of food and water, the physical abuse by the Nazis, and the emotional mistreatment they experience within the concentration camps.

Subject: the inmates

Direction: transition from human to animal

3 Reasons:

1. lack of food and water
2. physical abuse by the Nazis
3. emotional mistreatment in concentration camps

Because of these experiences in the concentration camps, Elie of Sighet has changed physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The post-concentration camp Elie of Buchenwald is a corpse, who has lost all faith in his God, and has completely disconnected emotionally from his former life.

Wiesel's survival of the concentration camps in Night is coincidence because he remains passive, survives events out of mere luck, and does not believe that God is in control of his life.

So you've already selected your topic (SUBJECT), chosen what you'd like to say about your subject (DIRECTION), and found three examples that back up your direction (3 REASONS). Now combine all of those things into ONE complete sentence. You've just created a THESIS STATEMENT!

5 Paragraph Essay

(Using S+D+3R Method)

SUBJECT (topic)

- I. Introductory paragraph (introduces the topic) *general ideas*
 - A. Attention-getter (1-2 sentences) *fact, example, question*
 - B. Necessary sentences / transition sentences / information FLUFF
 - C. Thesis statement

- II. First body paragraph (explores the first REASON) *specific ideas*
 - A. Topic sentence (S+D+1R)
 - B. Supporting ideas (Quote / Example) *Specific example/quote for R#1*
 - C. Closing / transition sentence

- III. Second body paragraph (explores the second REASON) *specific ideas*
 - A. Topic sentence (S+D+2R)
 - B. Supporting ideas (Quote / Example) *Specific example/quote for R#2*
 - C. Closing / transition sentence

- IV. Third body paragraph (explores the third REASON) *specific ideas*
 - A. Topic sentence (S+D+3R)
 - B. Supporting ideas (Quote / Example) *specific example/quote for R#3*
 - C. Closing / transition sentence

- V. Concluding paragraph (summarizes the topic and draws a conclusion) *general ideas*
 - A. Summarize ^{sentence} *one paragraph per body paragraph*
 - B. Re-state Thesis Statement (*in different words*)
 1. Pushes toward DIRECTION—what should the reader have learned? (*appeal to the emotions*)
 - C. Closing sentence