Developing a Thesis

What Is a Thesis?

- A thesis statement identifies the main idea of your essay, or it is the road map for your paper.
- A thesis typically is one-sentence long and is placed at the end of your introduction.
- A good thesis will be clear, specific and make a claim that can be debated.

What a Thesis is Not:

- A thesis is not merely a statement of a general truth or obvious facts.

  Example:

  1) War is bad and is very hard for child soldiers.
  2) Pollution is bad for the environment.

  These thesis statements are too general, obvious or can’t be debated well. Hence, they are poor thesis statements.

But these can be revised into strong thesis statements by answering the question “How war is hard for child soldiers?” or “in what ways is pollution bad for the environment?”

  Example:

  1) War is hard for child soldiers because they have to overcome physical, psychological, and emotional problems to rejoin society.
  2) Pollution harms the environment by destroying water sources and killing wildlife, thereby making it harder to sustain a growing society.

  These thesis statements are clear, specific and can be debated by people who read your paper.

Once you have a strong thesis, make sure that the body of your paper directly addresses, supports and refers back to your thesis statement.