What a Thesis Statement is Not:

A thesis statement is not a topic sentence. The topic will be broad; the thesis will be specific and argumentative.

A thesis statement is not vague. A thesis must be clear and precise. Do not make the reader guess what side the paper is on.

A thesis statement is not undecided. One must make a decision about what he/she agrees on, no beating around the bush, no sitting on the fence.

A thesis statement is not evaluative. It is not necessary to explain the reasoning in the thesis or give arguments against the other side; that is what the rest of the paper is for, just tell the reader what is the author believes.

A thesis statement is not gentle. Do not say “may,” “might,” or “could,” instead say “is,” “will,” and “should.” The author’s job is not to be nice; it is to be clear, decided, and confident.

Support your thesis and your thesis will support you!
How Do I Make a Thesis Statement?

1. First, pick a topic and develop two distinct sides.
   For example: Topic: Going to the zoo. Sides: Going to the zoo is important vs. Going to the zoo is pointless.

2. Write the side of the argument that this paper will support.
   For example: Going to the zoo is important.

3. Now, give the general reason that supports this side.
   For example: Going to the zoo is important because it develops critical thinking skills.

4. Take the general concept and narrow it.
   For example: Going to the zoo is important during children’s early development because it develops critical thinking skills.

What Do I Do with My Thesis?

The thesis is the center of one’s paper. Every argument, claim, and point in a paper back up the thesis statement.

At the end of every point, ask: “Does this back up my thesis? Did I tie this back to my thesis?” If a point does not tie back to the thesis, the paper is probably going off-topic.

Lean on the thesis! Reference back to it throughout the paper.

Revisit the thesis at the end of the paper!