



FINDING YOUR THESIS

A thesis sentence is the *main idea* of the writing that expresses the writers' *opinion* about the topic, their *purpose* for writing, and their *attitude*. All of the paragraphs that follow relate to this *central idea*. A thesis sentence *may preview* the organization of the writing.

Revising Thesis Sentences

- Limited: Thesis sentences are focused on one *limited topic*
Specific: Thesis sentences are precisely focused on one *specific issue* within that topic
 An issue may be written in the form of a question
Unified: All parts of the thesis sentence must be *related* to one specific idea

TOPIC	ISSUE	THESIS
(General)	(More Specific)	(Limited, Specific, Unified)
Horticulture: Caring for Plants	What are some ways to care for a plant?	To properly care for plants, people must remember to water them, to provide them with sunlight, and to feed them plant vitamins. (Purpose: Explanatory)
Watching Sports	How are televised sports similar to or different than live sports?	Television sports are less exciting and captivating than live sports events. (Purpose: Persuasive/Opinion)
Getting a College Education	Why do some people attend college?	Students attend college to obtain a well-rounded education and to pursue professional careers. (Purpose: Explanatory)

EXAMPLES

Topic: Television's presentation of women

Issue: What are some ways women are presented on television?

Working Thesis 1: Television presents contrasting views of women. (needs to be more *specific*, needs to identify writer's *purpose*)

Working Thesis 2: The television images of women are unfair, and women are shown as being either gorgeous and stupid or as being intelligent and homely. (needs to be *unified*)

Thesis: According to the stereotypical images of women on television, women are displayed as beautiful and brainless or unattractive and intelligent.

This sentence expresses the writer's opinion and attitude, and purpose, and it is unified on a specific issue.

opinion: (unfair) **purpose:** (to persuade) **specific:** (stereotypes of women on TV)

Original	Revision
1. Living in the city is interesting. (vague, more specific, needs purpose)	Living in the city is more interesting than living in the country because of the nightlife. (explanation)
2. Divorce laws should be tougher. (too general, needs limiting)	Divorce laws should be tougher to make young people think twice about the seriousness of the marriage commitment. (persuasion)
3. Dieting is harmful. (too general, non-specific, needs purpose)	Fad diets can be dangerous when they deprive the body of essential vitamins and nutrients or rely on the consumption of one food. (persuasion)
4. An old house is better than a new one. (non-specific)	Old houses are generally more beneficial to own than new ones because of the architecture, landscaping, and space. (opinion)
5. A frustrating experience was coming to a new state. (non-specific)	Moving to a new state was frustrating because of all of the changes I had to make in lifestyle. (self-expression)