Thesis Statement Types & Models

As you may already be aware, there are numerous types of arguments. Your instructor will let you know in the prompt for your paper the type of argumentative essay that he or she wants you to research and write. The type of argument will determine the format and content of your thesis statement and, subsequently, of your essay as a whole.

Find your assigned argument type below and follow the model provided to write a viable thesis statement. *Exception:* As always, any guidelines or models your instructor provides outweigh anything contained in Writing Center handouts. The types of arguments discussed are as follows:

1. Causal
2. Compare and contrast
3. Definitional
4. Ethical
5. Evaluation
6. Literary analysis
7. Persuasive
8. Pro/Con
9. Proposal
10. Rhetorical analysis
11. Rogerian

> *For a helpful checklist on how to construct an effective thesis statement, see the Writing Center handout "How to Write a Thesis Statement."*

1. **Causal Argument**

   What it does: Examines a cause and its effects, states an effect and traces the effect back to its causes, or debunks an existing cause-and-effect argument.

   Include in your thesis: Topic (cause OR effect) and statement of the effects OR the causes; or an existing argument and the reasons why it is invalid.

   Example thesis: <u>Climate change</u> <u>endangers life on earth</u> because it is leading to an increase in <u>catastrophic weather events</u>, <u>warmer average temperatures</u>, and <u>a rise in sea levels that threaten coastal communities</u>.

   <small>Topic (cause)   Claim   Effect 1   Effect 2   Effect 3</small>

2. **Compare and Contrast Argument**

   What it does: Evaluates the similarities and the differences of a particular topic. You can think of "compare" as discussing similarities and "contrast" as discussing differences.

   Include in your thesis: Topic (the item, process, situation, or solution; or the literary element or theme), claim about similarities, claim about differences, evidence to support both claims. The thesis statement will often include words such as "although," "even though," and "while."

   Example thesis: Although <u>Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"</u> and <u>Ibsen's *A Doll House*</u> both explore <u>the subjugation of married women in the late nineteenth century</u>, the authors use <u>characterization</u>

   <small>Topic, part 1   Topic, part 2   Similarity   Difference 1</small>

Difference 2   Evidence 1
and point of view in distinct ways to portray different outcomes: a descent into madness in the case
Evidence 2
of Gilman's protagonist and a greater sense of individuation in the case of Ibsen's Nora.

3. **Definitional Argument**

   What it does: Examines the nature of a word or a concept, a person, an event or a situation, or an object.

   Include in your thesis: Topic (the term, situation, or phenomenon you are defining), category, criteria for meeting this category, your claim.

           Topic   Claim   Category
   Example thesis: American Sign Language should be considered a foreign language for the purpose of
                          Criterion 1
   a college graduation requirement because it is not a language used within most American families,
           Criterion 2
   and it is usually learned outside of the family setting.

4. **Ethical Argument**

   What it does: Assesses whether a person, thing, or action is right or wrong through an examination of either principles or consequences, or both.

   Include in your thesis: Topic, claim of whether the topic you are analyzing is right or wrong, the consequence(s) or the principle(s) that determine the rightness or wrongness of the topic.

                     Topic
   Example thesis (consequences): Recycling consumer products, packaging, and other waste is a
       Claim   Consequence 1
   positive behavior to encourage in local residents because it keeps waste out of the landfill, reuses
         Consequence 2   Consequence 3
   manufacturing resources instead of requiring new ones, and is healthier for the environment.

                     Topic   Claim
   Example thesis (principle): Recycling consumer products, packaging, and other waste is the right
                Principle
   action to take because it is the duty of citizens to serve as good stewards of the earth.

5. **Evaluation Argument**

   What it does: Assesses whether a person, thing, or action is a good or a bad member of its category through an examination of the criteria determining goodness or badness.

   Include in your thesis: Topic, category, claim as to whether the topic you are analyzing is good or bad, criteria for a good or bad member of this category.

                          Topic   Claim
   Example thesis: From the point of view of customers, Facebook is a poor medium for conducting
                                     Criterion 1
   business transactions because it does not keep personal and financial information secure, it is
          Criterion 2   Criterion 3
   constantly changing, and it is more time-consuming than a regular website.

6. **Literary Analysis Argument**

   What it does: Analyzes the text of a short story, play, or poem and makes a claim about how various literary elements illustrate the theme of the piece, revealing how these literary elements and the theme work together to create meaning for the audience.

Include in your thesis: Title of the literary piece, genre, author, theme, statement of how the author uses literary elements (character, tone, setting, imagery, point of view, etc.) to illustrate the theme.

*Example thesis—**Short story**:* Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Birth-Mark" illustrates the destructive powers of perfectionism through the author's adept use of symbolism and foreshadowing.
_{Author · Genre · Title · Theme · Lit. Element 1 · Lit. Element 2}

*Example thesis—**Poem**:* Adrienne Rich's 1955 poem "Living in Sin" builds an extended metaphor rich in imagery and symbolism to convey the disillusionment that often occurs in the early years of marriage.
_{Author · Genre · Title · Lit. Element 1 · Lit. Element 2 · Lit. Element 3 · Theme}

7. **Persuasive Argument**

   What it does: Persuades the audience that your position on this issue has merit or to believe as you would like them to believe.

   Include in your thesis: Topic, claim, evidence.

   Example thesis: Climate change threatens the health and safety of all Americans because of the increase in air pollution, the rise in the number of days with record-breaking heat, and the greater frequency of catastrophic weather events.
   _{Topic · Claim · Evidence 1 · Evidence 2 · Evidence 3}

8. **Pro/Con Argument**

   What it does: Examines an issue from different perspectives and offers a recommendation based on a careful analysis of both the positive and the negative aspects of the issue.

   Include in your thesis: Topic, summary of pros, summary of cons, claim.

   Example thesis: Proponents of higher education maintain that college graduates earn more and experience better physical and mental health, while opponents state that college is not appropriate for everyone and that student loan debt is crippling. However, a careful analysis of both sides of the "should you get a college education?" argument reveals that the advantages of a college degree outweigh the disadvantages.
   _{Topic · Pro 1 · Pro 2 · Con 1 · Con 2 · Topic (restated) · Claim}

9. **Proposal Argument**

   What it does: Identifies a problem or a need, proposes an action-based solution(s), and demonstrates feasibility.

   Include in your thesis: Topic (problem/need), claim, possible solutions to the problem.

   Example thesis: The governments of all fifty states in the United States should promote measures to limit global warming by educating consumers, by giving tax incentives to green businesses, and by developing public transit systems.
   _{Topic · Claim · Solution 1 · Solution 2 · Solution 3}

10. **Rhetorical Analysis Argument**

What it does: Examines the organization and effectiveness of a written or visual argument.

Include in your thesis: Author's or artist's name, title of the work, topic of the analyzed work, analyzed work's claim, your claim (whether the rhetoric is effective, partially effective, or not effective), evidence supporting your claim using rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos, kairos).

Example thesis: In his humorous article, "Eat and Croak," Maynard G. Finnegan effectively uses
<u>Title</u> <u>Author</u> <u>Claim</u>
<u>Rhetorical Strategies 1, 2, 3</u>
pathos, ethos, and logos to convince his audience that genetically modified foods may not be a
<u>Topic of the article</u> <u>Claim of the article</u>

consumer's best choice.

Example thesis: Kathryn Tyler's article, "The Tethered Generation," on the adverse effects of
<u>Author</u> <u>Title</u> <u>Claim of the article</u>
technology on millennials creates a somewhat successful argument through her use of logical
<u>Topic of the article</u> <u>Claim, part 1</u>
organization, appropriate sources, and on-level language suitable for her audience but falls short
<u>Rhet. Strategy 1</u> <u>Rhet. Strategy 2</u> <u>Rhet. Strategy 3</u> <u>Claim, part 2</u>

with her omission of technology's benefits.

11. **Rogerian Argument**

What it does: Identifies an issue and acknowledges opposing positions while also presenting evidence for your own position in a fair and respectful way with the intent of opening up dialogue between you and the audience. The thesis is often delayed until the end of the essay.

Include in your thesis: Topic, acknowledgment of the opposing viewpoint, a balanced presentation of your own viewpoint with a summary of the already-presented evidence.

Example thesis: While civilian gun ownership is acceptable for personal protection, the idea to
<u>Writer's Viewpoint</u>
eliminate gun control laws is not the best solution. Agreeing that pursuing responsible gun
<u>Opposition Viewpoint</u> <u>Topic</u>
ownership is a step in the right direction to reduce the number of accidents, keep guns away from
<u>Evidence 1</u> <u>Evidence 2</u>
children, and reduce access to guns capable of unleashing mass murder.
<u>Evidence 3</u>