The LRC Guide to Thesis Statements

Thesis statements can be difficult to put together and can sometimes be overwhelming in their goals. A thesis statement, in theory, is written as a guide to the entirety of your paper. When someone reads a thesis statement, he or she should have an idea about the position of the paper in addition to what the forecast is. **A thesis statement is a sort of preview of the larger paper, but at the same time it also establishes the position or stance of the paper.**

A **Subject:** What are you writing about?
The **SUBJECT** of a thesis statement is the overall subject of the paper.

A **Position:** Why are you writing about this? Why is it important?
The **POSITION** of a thesis statement can vary depending on the type of paper, but for the most part it reflects the reason why the subject is being written about.

A **Forecast:** What will you be talking about in the paper? What are your reasons for why the subject is important?
A **FORECAST** serves as a guideline to what the rest of the paper will cover, and depending on the type of paper you are writing, can consist of different things.

The forecast is the trickiest part of the creation of a thesis because it requires you to think ahead about your entire paper. Some students find it much easier to write their paper with a partial thesis and then add the forecast when their paper is further along. Sometimes your thesis may change during the writing process, and you may have a paper that differs wildly from your thesis. Always double check your thesis and make sure it matches your paper's structure.

Remember, a thesis statement is not set in stone. You can always revise your thesis statement when you realize your paper is heading in a different direction than the one you originally imagined.

An Example of How to Write a Thesis

My **Subject**.

I want to write a research paper on the Prohibition. That is a little broad, however, so I need a narrower subject. I am writing about organized crime during the Prohibition. This is my **subject**.

A **Position**.

I need a **position**, or reason for writing on this topic. I want to point out how popular culture has made icons out of these criminals of the period. Some of these criminals include Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein, and Charles Luciano.

A **Forecast**.

I also need a **forecast** for my thesis statement. I feel that media such as newspapers, radio, and film all contributed to the mythologizing of these criminals.

I have all the elements I need for a thesis statement and now simply need to combine them into a single statement. Here are a couple of examples:

"*Prohibition-era organized crime gave society popular criminal figures* such as *Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein, and Charles Luciano* through tales of their lives across *newspapers, radio, and films*."

"Historical figures such as *Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein, and Charles Luciano* became *icons of the Prohibition-era* because of the influence of *newspapers, radio, and film*."

You can also divide up a thesis statement across two sentences if you have a much longer paper ahead:

"*During the Prohibition*, organized-crime was an ever present reality across the United States due to the larger than life tales of men like *Al Capone, Arnold Rothstein, and Charles Luciano*. These figures, as dangerous as they were, were made appealing and almost heroic due to their stories being mythologized across media such as *newspapers, radio, and even film*."

This is just a small example of the variety of approaches when it comes to thesis statements, but having a **subject**, **position**, and **forecast** is a good start to any thesis statement.