## Writing A Thesis

**Definition**:

A thesis is your contract with the reader to become engaged and accept or listen to your argument. In return, you promise to stay within the limits of the subject, to develop your subject clearly and sufficiently, and to communicate your intentions in full to your reader. It is also:

* Your controlling idea
* Your objective
* A clear statement of what you are trying to prove

**Criteria**:

1. State your subject AND reflect your attitude

of that subject.

1. Be specific.
2. Write a declarative statement.
3. Include only ONE idea.

**Examples**:

* The food we consume daily affects the health of our bodies, our minds, and our spirits.
* Fast food is a menace to our health, our relationships and our pocketbook.
* Honesty is the best way to deal with parents, employers, teachers, and friends.
* Not everyone needs a college education to be successful.
* Experience teaches us that we learn best from our mistakes.
* WHILE FAST FOOD MAY BE CONVENIENT, IT IS A MENACE TO OUR FINANCES, OUR RELATIONSHIPS, AND OUR HEALTH.

# The Opening Paragraph

Once your thesis statement has been approved, the next step is to write an opening paragraph. This includes three components:

* An attention-getting opening – Hook. This could be a quote (don’t let it stand alone), a question, a statistic, an anecdote, or an emotional exclamation. This opening can be anywhere from two to five sentences. The goal is to catch the reader’s attention as soon as possible!
* A brief discussion of the topic. This states what you are writing about and provides some background information for the reader. This should be longer than your attention-getting opening. Allow at least one sentence per main idea.
* End the paragraph with your thesis statement.

**EXAMPLE**:

We all know the catchy tune, “I’m Lovin’ it!” But, do we really know the effects of this fast food phenomenon on our lives? In our over-worked, stressed-out, and productivity-driven society, fast food chains offer a small relief from the task of making a meal: a task that often falls to the bottom of our proverbial “to do” list. However, upon closer examination, we have to wonder if the quick trip through the McDonald’s drive-through window is actually of real benefit to us. These days a Big Mac, large Fries and a soft drink cost upwards of $30 for a family of four. Convenient? Yes. Cheap? Definitely not. Also, a meal consumed in a car on the way to a hockey practice or dance lesson does not allow much opportunity for family members to interact or debrief from their work or school days. Finances and relationships are not all that suffer. Our bodies will also eventually pay the price for over-consumption of cholesterol and calorie-leaden food. While fast food may be convenient, it is a menace to our finances, our relationships, and our health.

# Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs are any paragraphs between the introductory paragraph and the concluding one. Each body paragraph develops one separate point or proof used to support the essay’s main idea. A body paragraph fully expands and develops its point in the following ways:

* Begin with a **topic sentence** that makes a general **statement** about your point.
* Next, provide a **specific example(s) (**this is your evidence) that illustrates and proves the validity of your point.
* Once an example(s) has been provided, an **explanation** on how this example(s) proves the point MUST be given. Make that connection. Elaborate in detail to deepen the reader’s understanding.
* Repeat the last two steps each time you include an example.
* Finally, write a “clinching” or **concluding sentence** that summarizes the point being made in the paragraph

# Closing Paragraphs

Closing Paragraphs are important for tying up any loose ends and clarifying the main points of your essay. A good closing paragraph deepens your argument because it draws a final conclusion for the reader. This is the last section of your essay that readers will read and thus remember. Therefore, it should **not** simply be a restatement of your thesis and main points in one or two sentences. Such a paragraph makes your essay appear boring, formulaic, and under-developed. A closing paragraph should still create a sense of “flow” in an essay and give readers something to think about long after they lift their eyes from the page.