**YOUR THESIS: *What position will you take on the issue?***

**The goal of the argumentative research paper is to convince the audience that the claim is true based on the evidence provided. Your claim is your thesis statement.**

* Your thesis statement must contain a subject + an argument.
* Your thesis statement should be specific – it should cover only what you will discuss in your paper and should be supported with specific evidence.
* Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.
* Your thesis statement should appear at the end of the introduction of your paper.

**Choosing an argumentative topic and writing your thesis is not an easy task. Your thesis statement should be such that…**

* **It is narrowed down**

**Ineffective example: Drug use is detrimental to society.**

There are several reasons this statement is too broad to argue. First, what is included in the category “drugs”? Is the author talking about illegal drug use, recreational drug use (which might include alcohol and cigarettes), or all uses of medication in general? Second, in what ways are drugs detrimental? Is drug use causing deaths? Is drug use changing the moral climate or causing the economy to decline? Finally, what does the author mean by “society”? Is the author referring to only America or to the global population? There are just too many questions that the claim leaves open. The author could not cover all of the topics listed above, yet the generality of the claim leaves all of these possibilities open to debate.

**Effective example: Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.**

In this example the topic of drugs has been **narrowed down** to illegal drugs and thedetriment has been narrowed down to gang violence. This is a much more manageable topic.

* **It contains an argument**

**Ineffective example: Pollution is bad for the environment.**

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word pollution means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, all studies agree that pollution is a problem; they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No once could reasonable argue that pollution is good.

**Effective example: At least twenty-five percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.**

This is an example of a **debatable thesis** because reasonable people could disagree. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation’s money. Others might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution.

* **It should be a topic that can be adequately supported (with statistics, outside sources, etc.)**

**Ineffective example: I feel that writing an argumentative essay is difficult.**

**Effective example: States must regulate use of cell phones on the road because drivers using phones are seriously impaired and because laws on negligent and reckless driving are not sufficient to punish offenders.**

**Thesis Equation: A narrowed down topic**

**+ A particular opinion (*argument)* on the topic**

**-------------------------------------------------------**

**An effective thesis**

**Examples:**

*High school graduates should be required to take a year off to pursue community service projects before entering college in order to increase their maturity and global awareness.*

*Because half of all American elementary school children consume nine times the recommended daily allowance of sugar, schools should be required to replace the beverages in soda machines with healthy alternatives.*

*The American automobile industry has been invigorated by foreign competition, which has forced it to create more economical production techniques and produce better cars.*