What is a “Thesis Statement”? 

Simply put, your thesis statement is a sentence that clearly expresses the controlling idea of your paper. A thesis does not just state your topic; a thesis contains: *your topic + your comment(s) about that topic.*

Example: Cigarette smoking + harmful effects on pets =

“Pet owners who smoke in their homes are doing serious damage to the health of their pets.”

True, a thesis can be more than one sentence, an “implied thesis,” or can appear anywhere in a paper. HOWEVER, students who are unfamiliar with creating a thesis should use the simplest method:

**Write a clear, one-sentence thesis and place it in the introduction of the paper.**

Your thesis:

- informs your reader about what you are attempting to prove/discuss.
- helps you form a well-organized, strong paper.
- connects with every major point in your paper.

Writing a paper without a strong thesis is like trying to drive a car with four flat tires—you won’t get very far.

Transforming a Weak Thesis into a Strong One:

Weak: “Shakespeare is the greatest author of all time.”

Strong: “Shakespeare’s amazing ability to capture the full range of dramatic human emotions is the main reason why he is still read today.”

Weak: “Many students use cell phones.”

Strong: “An on-campus cell phone ban would reduce classroom disruptions, and encourage students to socialize more with their classmates.”