

Developing a Thesis

A thesis statement (or research question) is considered the main point in college writing. This is typically a one to two sentence summary of the argument or analysis that you are presenting. Your thesis statement will help you organize, develop, and provide a guide for your argument. Read and do your research before creating a thesis statement. Some students make the mistake of writing their thesis before collecting enough information. Keep in mind that your thesis may change slightly or completely throughout the writing process as you learn more about the topic. Your thesis should be a strong statement that indicates what your paper will be about.

For example, if you are writing a six to eight page paper about social media for a sociology class, you might say:

There are some positive and negative aspects to social media.

This is a weak thesis statement because it is too general, as it is difficult to discuss everything there is to know about social media in six to eight pages, and it does not identify specific positive and/or negative aspects of social media.

Another thesis might look like this:

Adolescent girls are vulnerable to the negative influence that social media can have on self-esteem and self-image.

This is a stronger thesis statement because it narrows down the subject to a more specific topic, and identifies negative aspects of social media use among a specific population.

Remember that as you write and learn more about your subject, you may find that your thesis statement is either too vague or too specific, and it may be necessary to revise it.