

## Thesis Statement Review and Worksheet

### **What is a thesis?**

Your thesis is your direct response or answer to the essay prompt.

The thesis tells your reader a position or main point, includes the points of evidence you will use to prove your position or main point, and ideally connects larger issues.

### **What should my thesis look like?**

The general format of your thesis statement depends on the type of essay prompt you are answering.

- A report, or research essay, generally calls for a descriptive thesis that focuses on a theme or idea.
- An argument essay usually requires a thesis that takes a clear stance and includes several points to support that stance.
- An evaluative, or analytical essay, generally includes a judgment of a topic or source with several points to support that judgment, or it may state a characterization comparing several aspects of a topic, sources, etc.

Your thesis should be specific and clearly address the prompt.

A thesis includes a topic, but make sure you are actually taking a position and not simply stating a fact, topic, or subject.

A thesis typically has three parts: the **TOPIC**, the **ARGUMENT**, and **SUPPORTING EVIDENCE**

The length of your thesis will depend on the length of the assignment and the complexity of the prompt. If a prompt asks several questions, you will likely have a multi-sentence thesis statement.

### **Checking your thesis**

Make sure your thesis passes several tests:

- Does your thesis answer the question?
- Does your thesis take a position that others can oppose?
- Is your thesis specific?
- Does your thesis answer “how” and “why”?

**Exercise I**

Select the strongest thesis statement addressing the prompt.

Prompt: Assess the Progressive Era. Justify your characterization.

- There were positive and negative effects from the Progressive Era.
- The Progressive Era had complex outcomes because the time resulted in a strong increase in national infrastructure through the growth of the railroad while simultaneously widening the gap between the most rich and most poor through the near-monopolized accumulation of wealth, setting the stage for future consequences.
- The Progressive Era was good because of the railroad but had negative effects because of the income gap.
- The Progressive Era was defined by money and industry and saw an increase in personal wealth for those at the forefront of industries involved in transportation and technology. Advancements in these industries drove the economy forward and helped the US to take a place on the world economic stage. This economic power contributed to the boom of the 1920s.

How does this thesis directly answer the question/prompt?

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How does this thesis take a position that others can argue against?

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How is this thesis specific?

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How does this thesis answer the “how” and “why”?

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**Exercise II**

Select the strongest thesis statement addressing the prompt.

Prompt: Complete a report on a marine creature we reviewed this semester.

- The octopus is a cephalopod best defined by its invertebrate physiology and intelligence, contributing to its larger environment through its place in the food chain.
- The octopus is a fascinating marine creature and deserves more research.
- The octopus is a cephalopod best defined by its invertebrate physiology and intelligence, contributing to its larger environment through its place in the biosystem as a predator to specific fish and as prey to larger marine animals, therefore supporting the stability of the marine ecosystem.
- Of the many marine creatures, the octopus is the most interesting. People should care about the octopus because it is important to the ecosystem and is very intelligent. There are organizations devoted to preserving the octopus, and there are ways to help these organizations.

How does this thesis directly answer the question/prompt?

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How does this thesis take a position that others can argue against?

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How is this thesis specific?

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How does this thesis answer the “how” and “why”?

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### Exercise III

Write a thesis statement for the prompt.

Prompt: Read the article below. How are employers responding to the current economic situation when it comes to attracting workers? What factors are influencing these decisions, and how likely are they to be successful?

**HINT:** Find a theme in the article – topic, method, results, etc., to focus on that you intend to prove why that theme is apparent, important, and how it is such. Make sure you have a topic, argument, and supporting evidence.

Douglas-Gabriel, Danielle. "Emerging Job Perk: Student Loan Help." *The Washington Post*, 29 May 2022. *EBSCOhost*, <https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=n5h&AN=wapo.oba9aa8a-dea8-11ec-b629-946ed9dc45c9&site=ehost-live&scope=site>. Accessed 31 May 2022.

In a tight labor market, where competition for workers is fierce, companies are making a play to attract and retain employees by offering to pay their student loans.

Take Inova Health Systems, which announced this spring that it would contribute \$150 a month to pay down the education debt of employees who have been on the job less than three years, and \$250 a month to those who have been there longer.

"We know that our team members have a lot of choices of where to work, where they want their career to go," said Wendy Jolly, Inova's vice president for human resources. "We want them to feel like they have a competitive set of pay and benefit programs to match the excellence we expect."

Employers are heeding the call of younger workers for help with their education debt, and taking advantage of a new tax break born out of the pandemic. Still, there are more firms considering the perk than actually implementing it, a reluctance experts say is rooted in uncertainty about federal policies on debt cancellation and repayment.

Before the pandemic, student loan repayment benefits were becoming one of the most popular perks taking hold in corporate America. The percentage of employers offering student loan repayment assistance doubled to 8 percent between 2016 and 2019, according to the Society for Human Resource Management.

A 2021 survey by the Employee Benefit Research Institute found priorities shifted in the wake of covid-19, as employers sought to offer immediate financial help to workers in the form of short-term loans or emergency assistance. Craig Copeland, a senior research associate at the institute, said the two-year pause on federal student loan payments also placed employer-sponsored programs on the back burner.

Companies are revisiting the benefit as the economy rebounds, demand for workers intensifies and job seekers grow more selective.

Nearly half of the 250 large employers - those with more than 500 employees - surveyed by the institute in 2021 offer or plan to offer student loan assistance as a benefit, compared with 32 percent in 2018. Meanwhile, a third of the 238 employers surveyed by advisory firm Willis Towers Watson in 2021 said they would offer direct student loan repayment.

In March, Inova rolled out its student loan assistance program to more than 20,000 employees at five hospitals and a network of health-care facilities in Northern Virginia. So far, 1,600 workers have signed up, or about 1 in 10 employees, Jolly said.

The benefit is available to all employees and has a maximum benefit of \$10,000.

Inova partners with Edcor Data Services LLC, an education benefits company, to administer the program. Employees provide their loan information to Edcor, which transmits payments from Inova to the student loan servicer.

A little-noticed provision of the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or Cares Act, has also made it cheaper for companies to help employees repay their student loans. Companies can provide employees up to \$5,250 a year toward their debt without the contributions being taxed. Employees are also spared from being taxed on the money.

Before the tax break, if a company had contributed \$5,250 in student loan payments, it would have cost the employer and employee an estimated \$400 in payroll taxes, according to accounting firm Insogna CPA. An employee subject to a 22.6 percent federal income tax rate also would have to pay approximately \$1,190 in federal income taxes.

Firms that provide back-end support for student loan assistance programs are reporting an uptick in companies setting aside more money for the benefit in the wake of the tax break.

Sofi at Work, which helps companies with benefits, has seen an increase of more than 30 percent in contributions toward loan repayment programs from the first quarter of 2020 to the first quarter of 2021. The number of payments made by employers has more than doubled during that same period, said Barrett Scruggs, vice president of workforce financial well-being and business lead at Sofi at Work.

After the tax change, Fidelity Investments upped the maximum benefit it offers employees to help pay off education debt to \$15,000 from \$10,000. Google started a program in January that matches up to \$2,500 in student loan payments a year for its employees.

The tax break is comparable to the existing tax benefits for tuition reimbursement, but it is only good through 2025. And that sunset is giving some companies pause about creating a student loan assistance program, Copeland said. Congress can extend the tax break or make it permanent before it expires, but it is unclear whether that will happen.

Copeland said firms are also on the sidelines waiting to see whether the Senate will approve legislation allowing employers to match their loan repayments with retirement account contributions. The House passed the bill in March.

"There still isn't a lot of certainty around the benefit," Copeland said. "Clarity on the tax issues, a decision on debt cancellation from the Biden administration and on the restart of repayment . . . will turn those maybes [from companies] into 'yes, we are offering this benefit.' "

Thesis Statement:

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How does this thesis answer the “how” and “why”?

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Works Consulted/Adapted From

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