

Developing a Thesis

A thesis is not:

- A topic
- A fact
- An opinion, or
- A question

It cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”

A thesis has 2 parts:

- A. Tell what you plan to argue, and
- B. How you plan to argue it

Steps to Construct a Thesis

1) Analyze your primary sources

- a) This is where your critical reading & annotations come in, i.e. what are the deeper implications of the author’s argument? What assumptions have been made by the author? Why? As you try to answer these & other questions you will be on the path to developing a working thesis.

2) Write down your working thesis

- a) As ideas begin formulating in your mind, make sure to write them down
- b) As you write down your thesis, you will be forced to think of it clearly, logically, and concisely
This is not necessarily the final version of your thesis, but you’re one step closer!

3) State your thesis in your introduction

- a) A standard place for the thesis is at the end of an introductory paragraph

4) Anticipate counter-arguments

- a) Think about what might be said against your thesis, this helps you to think of which arguments you will refute in your essay

Every argument has a counter-argument. If yours doesn’t, then it’s not an argument!