



## The Learning Centre

### Essay Writing

#### Thesis Statements

A **thesis statement** articulates the central idea of a paper, and should imply the organization, structure and content of that paper in the form of an argument. The argument should be supported, using conducted research, in the body of the paper.

In order to establish a thesis statement, you can follow a 3-part process:



Watch as I develop my own thesis statement:

**Topic**

Gender Roles in Modern American Literature

Here, the topic starts out fairly general. At this point, I only have a vague idea of what I want to talk about in my essay, so I have to do some initial research to flush out a research question.

**Research Question**

How are gender roles portrayed in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*?

Now that I have developed a research question, I will select specific sources to use in the body of my essay. I may already have an idea of a possible thesis statement; however, as I see what past scholars have said about the topic, I can develop my own thesis statement with influence from that existing scholarship. I want to join in on the conversation, not start my own monologue.

**Thesis Statement**

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the detrimental nature of gender roles is shown through the existing female beauty standards, the application of these beauty standards in female characters' lives, and the consequences on the female characters who neglect these beauty standards.

After choosing the sources for the body of my essay, I was able to create a thesis statement that 1) is influenced by past scholarship that I have researched, 2) is influenced by my own ideas/perceptions about the topic/text, and 3) implies the structure of my essay. What I mean by the third point is that the structure of the essay will be unpacked in the body of my essay in the following way:

### Thesis Statement

In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the detrimental nature of gender roles is shown through the existing female beauty standards, the application of these beauty standards in female characters' lives, and the consequences on the female characters who neglect these beauty standards.

### Point One

Outlines how existing female beauty standards in *The Bluest Eye* show that gender roles are detrimental, using at least two sources or quotes as supporting evidence.

### Point Two

Outlines how the application of beauty standards in female characters' lives in *The Bluest Eye* shows that gender roles are detrimental, using at least two sources or quotes as supporting evidence.

### Point Three

Outlines how the female characters in *The Bluest Eye* neglect these beauty standards and face consequences for doing so, using at least two sources or quotes as supporting evidence. Then, explains how this fact shows that gender roles are detrimental.

### Conclusion

Reiterates thesis statement in a fresh and universal way (without introducing any new ideas).

## Forms of Thesis Statements

Your thesis statement may not follow the exact form as mine, and could use any of the following forms:

**Claims of fact/definition:** argues about what the definition of something is, rather than its truth

**Claims of cause and effect:** argues that something caused another thing to occur

**Claims about value:** discusses what something is worth, how we value it, or how we would rate/categorize it

**Claims about solutions or policies:** argues for or against a solution to a problem

## Final Tips for a Good Thesis Statement

1. Be narrow and specific in your focus
2. Express an argument logically
3. Engage the reader's attention
4. Foreshadow the paper's structure and content