

THESIS (OR FOCUS) STATEMENTS

It's all about focus.

Create thesis statements for

- ▶ nonfiction articles
- ▶ nonfiction book
- ▶ fiction short stories
- ▶ novels
- ▶ screenplays

I sometimes call them

- ▶ "focus statements"
- ▶ "a one-sentence"

What is a Thesis Statement?

A thesis or focus statement is stating the single main idea that you want to communicate through your nonfiction article, book, or fictional story in one sentence.

A Thesis Statement is NOT:

A word or phrase. Those are probably topics:

- ▶ Homelessness
- ▶ Domestic Abuse

It is not a theme:

- ▶ Love conquers all.
- ▶ Hope never dies.

It is not a tag line. A "tag line" is what goes on the movie poster.

- ▶ Every man dies. Not every man truly lives. (Braveheart)

It might be closest to a logline in screenwriting.

- ▶ A lonely Kansas farm girl is whisked away by a twister to a fantasy land and must find her way back home.

A Thesis Statement IS:

Always a complete sentence.

Specific, not vague.

A good thesis statement:

- ▶ limits your content
- ▶ gives an idea of what you're going to write about
- ▶ hints at your position on the topic
- ▶ hints at your purpose in writing.
- ▶ Perhaps a bit **provocative**.

How to Nail Down a Thesis Statement

It's a struggle for me.

Get a draft down. Know it's probably going to change.

Work with it. Massage it. Refine it.

My Thesis often gets refined with

- ▶ writing,
- ▶ thinking
- ▶ brainstorming.

Try Mind-mapping?

Rewrite. Revise. Repeat.

What To Do With a Thesis Statement

Nonfiction Articles:

- ▶ Fits into the article, usually close to beginning.
- ▶ Or possibly at end of an article.

Nonfiction Books:

- ▶ Fits at book introduction.
- ▶ Would be invaluable on the back cover copy.
- ▶ Also a thesis statement for each chapter in the book.

Fiction Writers

I believe applies to fiction writers: short stories, novels, screenplays.

Unlike nonfiction writers, don't need a thesis statement for every chapter.

- ▶ Fiction focus statements may never actually appear in words.
- ▶ Will keep other thoughts from creeping in and muddling your main, focused idea.
- ▶ Come out with a much more cohesive story.

What To Do With Those Rabbit Trails

For nonfiction writers:

- ▶ Sidebars
- ▶ Additional article.
- ▶ A series of related articles.

For fiction writers:

- ▶ A sequel.
- ▶ A prequel.
- ▶ Another story in a series.
- ▶ Another story.
- ▶ A short story. Free e-book to generate interest in your novel.