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