



# ENV201



Writing Workshop  
Thesis Statements and Persuasive Essays

These materials were created for educational purposes by the course instructor, Professor Tenley Conway.

# What is a Thesis?

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- ▶ a one- or two-sentence statement that:
  - explicitly outlines the purpose or point of your essay
  - points toward the development or course of argument your essay will take
  - contains an arguable point (NOT an observation or a fact)

# Thesis

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- ▶ thesis answers a question (*how* or *why*, NOT just what, who, where, when)
  - note: “what/who/where/when” questions = endless description without analysis
- ▶ thesis must be arguable
- ▶ has three parts:
  1. “subject”
  2. argument or claim about subject
  3. strategy for proving claim (including an implied pattern of argument)

# Thesis Statement

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## ▶ Remember:

- Your thesis should be in your introduction; think of your introduction as a “thesis paragraph”
- Either your thesis OR your introduction should include a “pattern or course of argument” that indicates “how” you will development your argument
- In social sciences, this is very often “cause and effect”, but may also be:
  - Compare / contrast
  - Example / illustration
  - Chronology
  - Categorization
  - Definition

# Thesis Paragraph: An Example

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- ▶ Introduce issue (the expansion of the Darlington nuclear facility as a means of generating more electricity in Ontario)
- ▶ Introduce “problem”, “urgency”, “relevance” etc.
- ▶ State method of argument / analysis
- ▶ Argument A (the one you are supporting)
- ▶ Argument B (the one you are not supporting)
- ▶ [Statement of scope / limitations]
- ▶ **Thesis**: Argument A is preferable for at least two reasons.

# A Potential Template for your Persuasive Essay

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## Introduction

- ▶ Clear statement about issue or problem under discussion
- ▶ Methods of approaching or understanding the issue or problem
- ▶ Advantages / disadvantages of Option A
- ▶ Advantages / disadvantages of Option B
- ▶ Thesis Statement that does two things:
  - ▶ Makes a Claim about the relationship between A and B
  - ▶ Indicates a Strategy for proving the Claim (indicate WHY one position is more persuasive than the other or HOW you will develop your argument)

# A Potential Template for your Persuasive Essay

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## Body Paragraph #1

- ▶ Topic sentence (makes arguable claim about the position you are arguing for)
- ▶ Introduction and citation of evidence
- ▶ Explanation of Evidence
- ▶ Introduction and citation of evidence
- ▶ Explanation of Evidence (relating it back to topic sentence)
- ▶ Transition

## Body Paragraph #2

- ▶ Repeat above format

# A Potential Template for your Persuasive Essay

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## Body Paragraph #3

**[this is often a discussion of Counter-Argument]**

- ▶ Topic sentence (makes statements about weaknesses of other position)
- ▶ Introduction and citation of claim made by opposite position
- ▶ Explanation of Evidence refuting that claim
- ▶ Introduction and citation of claim made by opposite position
- ▶ Explanation of Evidence refuting that claim
- ▶ Concluding statement emphasizing strength of your position



# A Potential Template for your Persuasive Essay

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## Conclusion

- ▶ 3 – 4 sentences indicating **HOW** you have argued support for your position and weakness of other positions
- ▶ Focus on **methods** of analysis rather than simply restating your TS

