THESIS STATEMENTS:

DEFINITON: a statement that tells readers the main points of your paper. Think of it as the answer to the question your paper explores.

LOCATON: end of the introduction

CHARACTERISTICS:

- Your distinct standpoint on the subject
- A brief summary of the main arguments
- A roadmap for the paper

HOW IT RELATES TO THE REST OF THE PAPER:

A THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD:

- Answer the questions 'how' and/or 'why'
- Provide the logic of the paper
- Cover the entire paper

THE REST OF THE PAPER SHOULD:

- Prove that the thesis statement is correct
- Repeat a rephrased thesis statement in the conclusion

A STRONG THESIS STATEMENT IS

- DISPUTABLE: not obvious; some readers can disagree
- FOCUSED: Not too broad; your position is clear
- RELEVANT: Not boring; readers won't say 'so what'?

3 QUESTIONS ON EVALUATING A THESIS STATEMENT:

- Could someone argue for or against it?
- Does the author argue for it?
- Will readers want to read more about it?

5 GROUPS OF WORDS NOT TO USE IN A THESIS STATEMENT:

- **Personal pronouns:** I, you, we
- **Uncertain Qualifiers:** might, perhaps, maybe
- **Extreme words:** all, everything, none, always, never
- **Vague words:** some, somewhat, kind of
- **Obvious Exaggerations:** life-saving, best of the best…

6 GROUPS OF MUST-USE WORDS:

- **Sources of Information:** studies reveal, research shows
- **Realistic Views:** many, significant, most
- **Characteristics:** primarily, frequently, often
- **Clear Explanations:** because, thus, since, for, due to
- **Relationships:** demonstrate, illustrate, tendency, contribute to
- **Active Verbs:** demonstrate, illustrate, identify, present, inform, reveal, show, express, justify...

FORMULA OF A THESIS STATEMENT:

MAIN CLAIM (your specific standpoint)

+

SUBTOPIC 1 (to be provided in paragraph 1)

+

SUBTOPIC 2 (to be provided in paragraph 2)

+

SUBTOPIC 3(to be provided in paragraph 3)

EXAMPLES:

There are some negative and positive aspects to starting high school at a later time.

WEAK: vague and fails to take a stand

High school students are more successful when school starts later in the morning.

BETTER: Takes a stand, but is not specific

Later start times for high school students significantly improve academic progress and attendance.

STRONG: Specific and takes a stand

Dante was an Italian poet and philosopher who wrote in the Middle Ages.

WEAK: Fact only

Dante was one of the greatest poets of the Middle Ages.

BETTER: Takes a stand, but is too BROAD

Dante's masterful use of biblical allegory makes *The Divine Comedy* one of the most important literary contributions of the Middle Ages.

STRONG: Specific and takes a stand