

Analytical Thesis Statements

Adapted from *Writing Analytically* by Rosenwasser and Stephen

To analyze something is to ask what that something *means*.

An analytical essay answers *how* something does what it does or *why* it is as it is.

Therefore, a thesis statement in an analysis paper should be answering a HOW or WHY question.

A *strong thesis* makes a claim about the subject that needs proving. It provides the writer (and the reader) with a clearly focused lens through which to view the subject.

A *weak thesis* either makes no claim or is an assertion that does not need proving.

It is a fuzzy lens that will not help the writer (or the reader) be guided to a better understanding of the subject.

Most weak thesis statements suffer because they are overly broad (or not specific enough)

Their grammar is often an indication of why they don't help the writer to bring their subject into clear focus. The following example from Rosenwasser and Stephens' *Writing Analytically* show us how this works:

<u>Broad Noun</u>	+	<u>Weak Verb</u>	+	<u>Vague, Evaluative Adjective</u>
The economic situation	is			bad.

<u>Specific Noun</u>	+	<u>Active Verb</u>	+	<u>Assertive Predicate</u>
The tax policies of the current administration		threaten to reduce the tax burden on the middle class		by sacrificing education and health-care programs for everyone.

The best way to remedy the problem of overgeneralization is to move toward *specificity* in word choice, in sentence structure, and in idea.

“By” or “because” are words that show you are answering a how or why question.

Analytical Thesis Statement for the Text-in Context Essay

Text-in-Context, your thesis needs to interweave references to the text and its context to be considered clear and specific. This is the case with Siwei Shen's essay from *A Student's Guide*:

Specific reference to a context

Specific reference to a pattern in the text

Contextual explanation of its meaning

From the Marxist view, the **process of the metamorphosis** symbolizes the class struggles of the proletariat to break out of a life of being exploited. Such representation is displayed [in *The Metamorphosis*] in the **similarity** between the causes, nature, and ending of Gregor's transformation and those of proletarian struggles.

Comparison between text and context

In this case the HOW is still defined by a pattern in the text, but the WHY is defined by a context that is implicit in the novel, but not obvious without research.

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