

Thesis Statements

PHIL2010 (Writing Aid)
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- Thesis statement types 1-4 are not adequate for an analytical essay (essay 1 and 2), although some are adequate for forms of writing. Thesis statement type 5 is one example of an effective thesis statement for an analytical essay.
- Essay Rubric: 50% Critical Thinking (analysis); 30% Content; 20% Style.

1) Themes only

- I will discuss individuality.
- Hesse discusses individuality.
- I will consider whether isolation is required for true individuality.
- Problem with (1): these statements do not state the author's own view; the first two only state a theme, and the last example only states the problem that the author will take up.

2) Reports

- Hesse and Wampole both oppose individuality in life.
- Problem with (1) and (2): thesis statement does not state your own view; it states the views of others.

3) Subjective Content / Thesis

- There is no right and wrong to the good life, and there is no right and wrong to whether one wants to spend money; so one should do whatever one wants.
- Problem: subjective content; controversial
- The following argument is not convincing
 1. Smith thinks x on some issue
 2. Gandhi thinks not x on same issue
 3. So, there are differences of opinion
 4. So, it is all subjective.
- This is a view one could argue for i.e. a strong relativist thesis; but, it cannot be merely on differences of opinion. You would have to take up cultural relativism and consider arguments for and against this view.
- Unless you are taking up the issue of relativism, try to treat the issue you are working on as an objective problem; here are some questions to consider
 - What would make your life and the life of others better?
 - What would make your life and the life of others worse?
 - What should you do?
 - What would you recommend that your children do?
 - What would happen if everyone did x (e.g. lied)?

4) Interpretation

- I will argue that Marx urges a collectivist understanding of the self and that we should all aim to reach this ideal by any means necessary. In addition, Marx thinks individuality is not required for attainment of the true self.
 - Problem: This is a good thesis statement, but the aim of the paper, as stated, is one of interpretation and not analysis. An analytical essay must take up the idea and the author of the paper must give his own opinion on the issue. In this case, the author should give his own reasons and views on the self or comment on Marx.
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5) A Good Thesis Statement

- I will argue that isolation from society is required for individuality, which in turn is a precondition for attainment of the authentic self. I will base my view on utilitarian principles and the idea that there are different kinds of qualities of pleasure.
 - This thesis statement
 1. expresses one's own view (unlike 1-2)
 2. expresses a view that is objective (unlike 3)
 3. expresses one's view on issue (unlike 4)
 - You should still use the readings to support your view
 - are there any observations, claims, arguments from what we have read that support your position?
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