

# MCC Writing Center

---

## How to Craft an Argumentative Thesis

A **thesis statement** is the central message, point, position, or meaning of an essay. In an argumentative essay (in which a writer's primary purpose is *to persuade* a specific audience), a thesis statement is typically made up of two parts: (1) a **claim**, which asserts the one statement the writer wants his/her readers to agree with, and (2) **support**, which is usually a list of reasons as to why readers should accept the writer's claim.

**As you get started, see also the Writing Center handout "The Art of Argumentative Writing."**

*Below is an example of a thesis statement (broken down into its component parts) responding to the following issue question; 'Should the U.S. continue to implement the Electoral College?' On the back of this page is a blank template for you to use.*

**Claim** (the one statement that the writer wants his/her readers to agree with):

The United States should continue to implement the system of the Electoral College in presidential elections.

**Support** (the reasons why readers should agree with this claim):

1. The Electoral College unifies the nation by forcing a presidential candidate to gain support from all regions of the country.
2. The Electoral College system is democratic, in that it gives heavily populated urban centers greater electoral power.
3. The preservation of the two-party system (and political stability) is assured by keeping the EC intact.
4. The Electoral College has worked effectively, with only a few exceptions, for more than two centuries.

**\*Tip:** To be persuasive a writer must acknowledge some of the arguments that counter his/her claim and/or support. Some writers like to forecast this in their thesis statements.

**Counterarguments:**

1. A candidate could win the popular vote and still lose the election.
2. The Electoral College inhibits the possibility of a third party candidate from being elected.
3. The Electoral College allows for the possibility of a "faithless elector."

**Thesis Statement** (this one begins by summarizing the central claim against the position):

Although some argue that it stifles a democratic election, the United States should continue to implement the system of the Electoral College in presidential elections because the Electoral College does democratically unify the nation; it is, contrary to what some may say, democratic; it preserves political stability through the two party system; and, most importantly, the Electoral College has, by and large, worked effectively for more than two centuries.

## Outline Your Own Argumentative Thesis Statement

**\*Tip:** A thesis statement evolves during the research and writing process of an essay. Therefore, don't think that the thesis you initially outline is set in stone. The more you study your topic and draft your argument, the more you may need to alter or tweak your thesis (your claim, support, counterarguments); in fact, this is what normally happens.

### Thesis Statement

**Claim:**

**Support** (*sometimes it is helpful to begin each one of these with the word "because," as this will help you connect each one of these to your claim*):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Counterarguments** (*reasons people may disagree with your claim and/or support*):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Thesis Statement

Compiled by Brett Mertins, October 2010



Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Statement— Metropolitan Community College does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, age, disability or sexual orientation in admission or access to its programs and activities or in its treatment or hiring of employees.

Last Updated August 2014