

## Help with Thesis Statements

Here are some guidelines and examples of thesis statements for sample topics for upcoming our research paper drafts.

### ● A good thesis statement for a research paper:

- Says something argumentative and specific enough.
- Mentions the kind of evidence—one or two author(s) or text(s)--that will be used to prove your argument (What kinds of discussion / evidence can we expect to see in your paper?)
- Tells the reader what connections you will be making between ideas and texts (A good thesis should be an 'umbrella' that will cover your major ideas and kind of evidence....)
- Answers at few of the basic journalistic questions: Who? What? When? Where? How?
- Makes a connection between two ideas or texts (for example, Richard Dawkins and McEwan's short story, "Us or Me," a psychologist writing about schizophrenia vs. a film portraying the disease, like *A Beautiful Mind*....)
- If using an imaginative text (a film, a graphic novel or a short story), it is good to mention which 'elements' you will be discussing (characters, realistic psychology, setting, etc.)

### A weak thesis statement:

- Does not argue a position or viewpoint
- Is too general (and cannot be 'proved,' as least not in just 6 pages)
- Does not answer at least some of the basic journalistic questions: Who? What? When? Where? How?
- Is too specific (It may deal only with evidence or one or two reasons)

● Thesis Statement Exercise

• **\*\*See if you can spot problems with any the following sample thesis statements on some (hypothetical) topics for our class research paper.** Which one of these examples that sound like good research paper thesis statements? **Circle the successful examples. Why did you make your choices?** Make notes on the examples that need more thinking and/or specifics?

- 1) Based on several popular and scholarly sources, I will argue that the portrayal of autism in the film *Temple Grandin* is largely accurate in showing the way some autistics think both in depicting their mindblindness and ability to think visually.
- 2) While the portrayal of schizophrenia in the character of John Nash in Ron Howard's *A Beautiful Mind* is inspiring and ends happily, based on several scholarly sources, I will argue the real prognosis and treatment of schizophrenia is often far less optimistic.
- 3) Based on recent research on autism and its treatment, I will argue that the portrayal of Temple Grandin in the TV movie *Temple Grandin* gives a largely accurate picture of the way real autistics think and cope with their world.
- 4) Making phone calls while texting is bad and should never be done.
- 5) Worldwide, robots will bring many promises with very few dangers.
- 6) Based on several sources, I will argue that the portrayal of artificial intelligence in *I, Robot* is optimistic about the possibility for robots with true consciousness and the ability of humans and robots to co-exist peacefully.
- 7) Robots and Artificial Intelligence are experiencing many exciting developments today. I will describe some of them in industry and in medicine.
- 9) James Cameron's classic sci-fi film *The Terminator* portrays a future in which runaway robots menace humanity. This film highlights some of the promise and perils of robotics.
- 10) Based on several sources, I will argue that the film *The Matrix* is largely pessimistic about the development of dangerous runaway artificial intelligence and autonomous military technology. The film anticipates recent warnings about future AI by Stephen Hawking and Elon Musk, among other thinkers.

# ANSWER KEY

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- ✗ 4) Making phone calls while texting is bad and should never be done.
- ✗ 5) Worldwide, robots will bring many promises with very few dangers.
- ✓ 6) Based on several sources, I will argue that the portrayal of artificial intelligence in *I, Robot* is optimistic about the possibility for robots with true consciousness and the ability of humans and robots to co-exist peacefully.
- ✗ 7) Robots and Artificial Intelligence are experiencing many exciting developments today. I will describe some of them in industry and in medicine.
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