



COLUMBINE 316

WRITING CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT COLORADO SPRINGS

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WRITING AN EFFECTIVE THESIS

An Effective Thesis Statement

- Is a preview or map of your essay
- Is a single, clear, grammatically correct, sharply focused sentence
- Identifies the subject of your essay
- Responds to the assignment
- Makes an argument
- Is not a question or a statement of fact
- Is narrow or broad enough to discuss thoroughly within the space of your essay Can be "open" or "closed"

Examples:

Open – Nuclear energy is too dangerous to be used as a source of electrical energy.

Closed – Nuclear energy is too dangerous to be used as a source of electrical energy because of its potential hazard for people in the vicinity of the power plant and its detrimental effects on the environment.

The Process Of Developing An Effective Thesis.

- Explore your own knowledge about the subject and make generalizations based on your experiences.
- Explore the assignment and develop an argument that responds to the question that is asked.
- Take a stand on the subject and create a *working* thesis.
- Find evidence to either support or discredit your working thesis.
- As you write, continue to change and update your working thesis until it fits your purpose and your evidence.

A GOOD THESIS:

Open - Using rhetoric calculated to distress and infuriate, Frederick Douglass promoted the abolitionist cause.

Closed - Using rhetoric calculated to distress and infuriate, Frederick Douglass promoted the abolitionist cause by calling complacent Northerners to action and uniting free Blacks.

NOT A THESIS:

- The first version of Frederick Douglass' autobiography was published in 1845.
- Frederick Douglass devoted his life to the abolitionist cause.
- *Is Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* effective slavery propaganda?
- Frederick Douglass' use of intimate emotional appeals wrung the hearts of Northerners.

Evaluate the following thesis statements and write a revised thesis for each:

1. The feminist movement protects women's rights.

Revised: _____

2. There are serious objections to today's horror movies.

Revised: _____

3. In this paper, I will discuss the relationship between fairy tales and early childhood.

Revised: _____

4. This paper will deal with the various forms of racism that students, new and old, will encounter on campus and, secondly, with solutions or at least partial solutions that students can initiate, though they will not necessarily be easy or accomplishable in the four to five years the average student will spend on campus.

Revised: _____

Revise the following two working thesis statements by incorporating the ideas from both statements into one coherent, well-developed thesis statement:

1. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale* is a bawdy story of adultery and revenge.
2. Characters in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale* fail to meet certain audience expectations.

Revised: _____

Answer Key:

1. Through voting, picketing, and increasing society's awareness, women of the feminist movement have increased the rights of women.
2. Many individuals in society object to young children viewing horror movies because they promote violence and desensitize viewers.
3. In an effort to ignite a child's imagination and to propel a child's curiosity, parents utilize fairytales as teaching tools in the early stages of a child's development.
4. Although many college students encounter racism on their college campuses, they can initiate change by endorsing the creation of diverse ethnic clubs, participating in multi-cultural activities, and promoting a tolerant attitude in class discussions about racial issues.
1. and 2. Some of the characters in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale*, a bawdy story of adultery and revenge, fail to meet audience's expectations of debauchery.