

A Brief Introduction to Thesis Statement by Dennis Rovere, MA
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What is it?: Simply stated, a thesis statement is the argument you plan to present in your essay. For example:

Q: Is this a thesis statement?

Harold Cardinal is an Indigenous architect.

A: No. It is a statement of fact, he is an Indigenous architect – nothing to argue.

Q: What about this?

Harold cardinal is a great architect.

A: Better, but too vague – Compared to whom? Other Canadian architects? All architects?

How do you define great?

Q: Finally, what about this one?

Harold Cardinal's architecture clearly reflects his Indigenous roots.*

A: Good. You can argue this point. However, be careful of descriptive words such as clearly* unless you plan on defining and describing this aspect of his work in greater detail.

Where does it fit?: Typically, the thesis statement is placed near or at the end of the first paragraph.

Anything else to consider?: Yes. It is a stand-alone statement. If you write “*Harold Cardinal's architecture clearly reflects his Indigenous roots and I will demonstrate it using three of his works, namely ...*” you have written too much. How you will accomplish this task (e.g., using three of his works) needs to be in a separate, and often a following, sentence.

But Dennis I can't come up with a good thesis statement, now what?

There are two types of thesis statements:

- The working thesis – gets you started doing the research so you don't waste time. It will change as you progress through the research & start writing.
- The refined (final) thesis – develops from the working thesis as your research progresses.

Something else to consider: All ideas need to relate to the thesis statement & each other.

This creates flow and connections throughout the paper.

