

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE THESIS

An effective thesis includes the following features:

- Clarity of word choice (considering proposed audience);
- A clearly defined topic which is suitable to the length and medium of the assignment;
- A strong position about the topic. Your position should not be obvious (ex. Women are important in society). A thesis is something about which reasonably informed people can disagree.

The Sheridan Baker Thesis Machine*

(* slightly revised)

This type of thesis "making" is provisional and mechanical. Therefore, the result of this procedure should be polished, and the method itself is designed to be outgrown. It does, however, offer the writer a method to begin thesis development.

Question (topic and issue)

- State the general topic of the paper.
- Recognize and state the specific issue you will address by formulating a question about the topic.
 - **Example:** Are grades necessary in high school?
 - **Example:** Has Thailand progressed economically?

Position (your answer)

- Give your position on the issue of your question.
 - **Example:** Grades are not necessary in high school.
 - **Example:** Thailand has progressed economically in certain areas, but still trails behind other developing nations.

Because Clause (rationale)

- Add three main reasons in a "because" clause.
- By using a "because" clause, you can covert your answer into a sentence that states your position on the issue while providing three rationales, or reasons, for your position.
 - **Example:** Grades are unnecessary in high school because they reduce a student's interest in authentic learning, they are subjective according to an individual teacher's preferences, and they encourage cheating.
 - **Example:** Economic progress in Thailand is stunted because its educational system is poor, it has environmental problems, and there are many failures in its management of economic resources.

Although Clause (the other side)

- Refine the rough thesis by adding the counter-argument in an "although clause" (these are conditions or exceptions to your position, or the other side of the issue.)
 - **Example:** Although many teachers and schools administrators argue that grades are a legitimate way to evaluate student progress, grades are unnecessary in high school because they reduce a student's interest in authentic learning, they are subjective according to an individual teacher's preferences, and they encourage cheating.
 - **Example:** Although Thailand has progressed economically in certain areas, its progress is stunted because its educational system is poor, it has environmental problems, and there are many failures in its management of economic resources.