



INFORMATIONAL WRITING

Writing the introductory paragraph

- Uses a Lead/hook
- Presents the Thesis
- Communicates the organizational structure

OPENING PARAGRAPHS...

Why are they important???

- First impressions are lasting impressions!
- If your introduction is poor, your readers may stop there, or continue on with the wrong assumptions about your essay.
- If it's good, even captivating, your readers will continue enthusiastically.



• OPENING PARAGRAPHS...

Four points it must accomplish...

- Grab your readers' attention and interest
- Identify the specific topic of the essay
- Conceptualize your discussion (put into words what your topic is)
- Explain how your paper is organized and structured



THE LEAD OR HOOK SENTENCE

A writer may begin with...

- an anecdote or scenario
- a quotation
- a brief history/overview
- an interesting fact
- a description
- a question
- taking a stand
- a contrasting situation
- List lead
- Definition lead



Key Features

Don't State the Obvious

In thesis statements, you should avoid using statements like, “This essay will discuss...” or “I’m going to write about...” Try to write a thesis statement that captures your reader’s attention without announcing your main topic and stating the obvious. Look at the examples In the next slide.



Identify the specific topic ...

- Give your reader a statement that identifies your topic without announcing it **without** such phrases...
 - “My paper is about...”
 - “I’m going to tell you about...”
 - “Let me tell you what I think...”

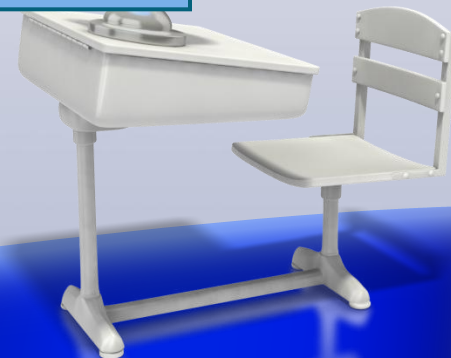


Key Features

Don't State the Obvious

~~In this essay, I am going to discuss the effects of long-term drug abuse.~~

Long-term drug use can have disastrous effects on one's marriage, career, and health.



Write a clear thesis statement

- A thesis statement is a concise (brief, not wordy) sentence or two that states what the essay is about
 - gives direction to the essay
 - usually placed at the end of the introductory paragraph



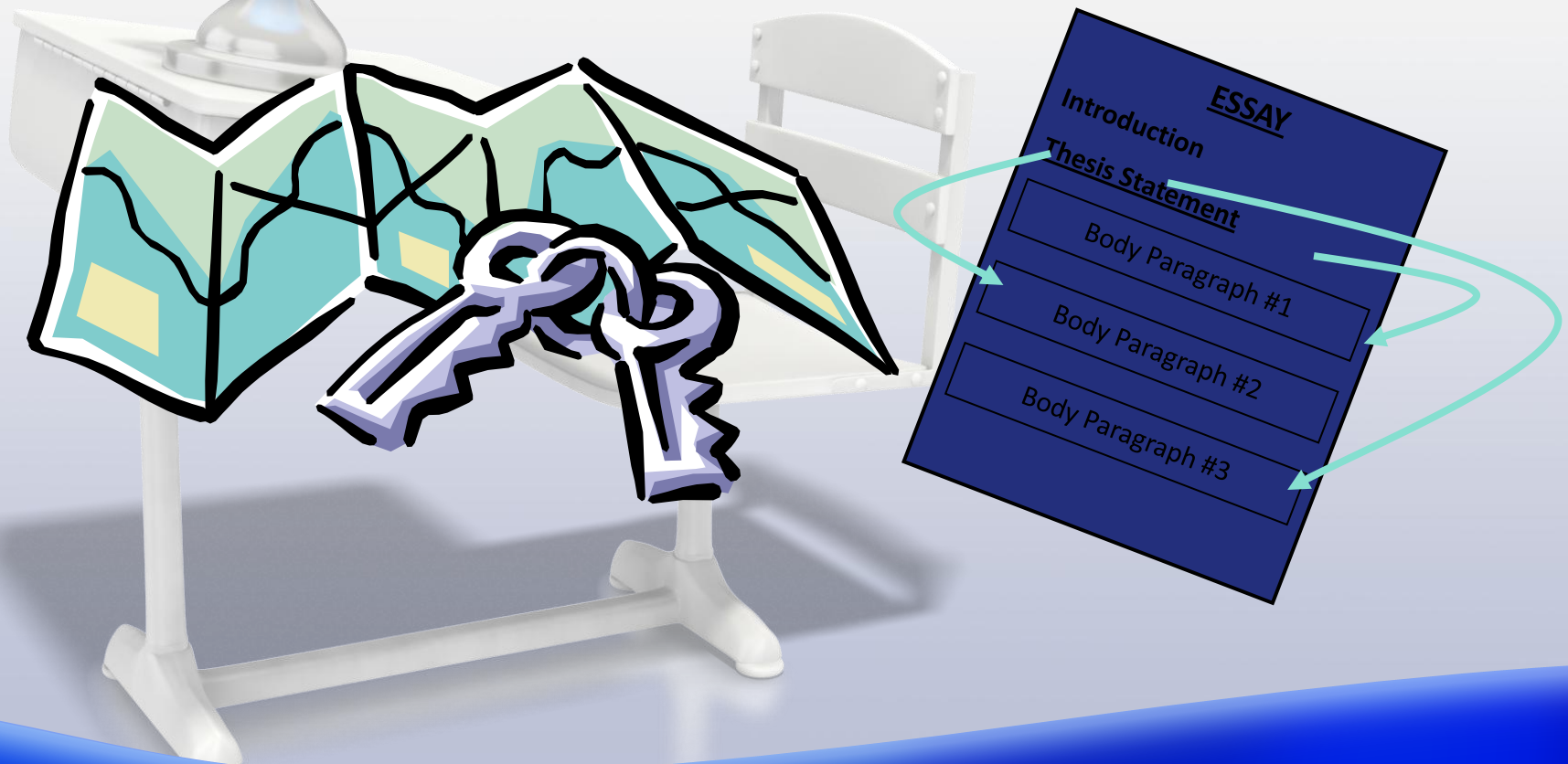
Explain how your paper is organized

- This sentence may be part of the thesis or a separate sentence after the thesis.
- Tell the reader how you are going to talk about your topic
- Indicate the sections of your essay and something about the order in which they will be discussed



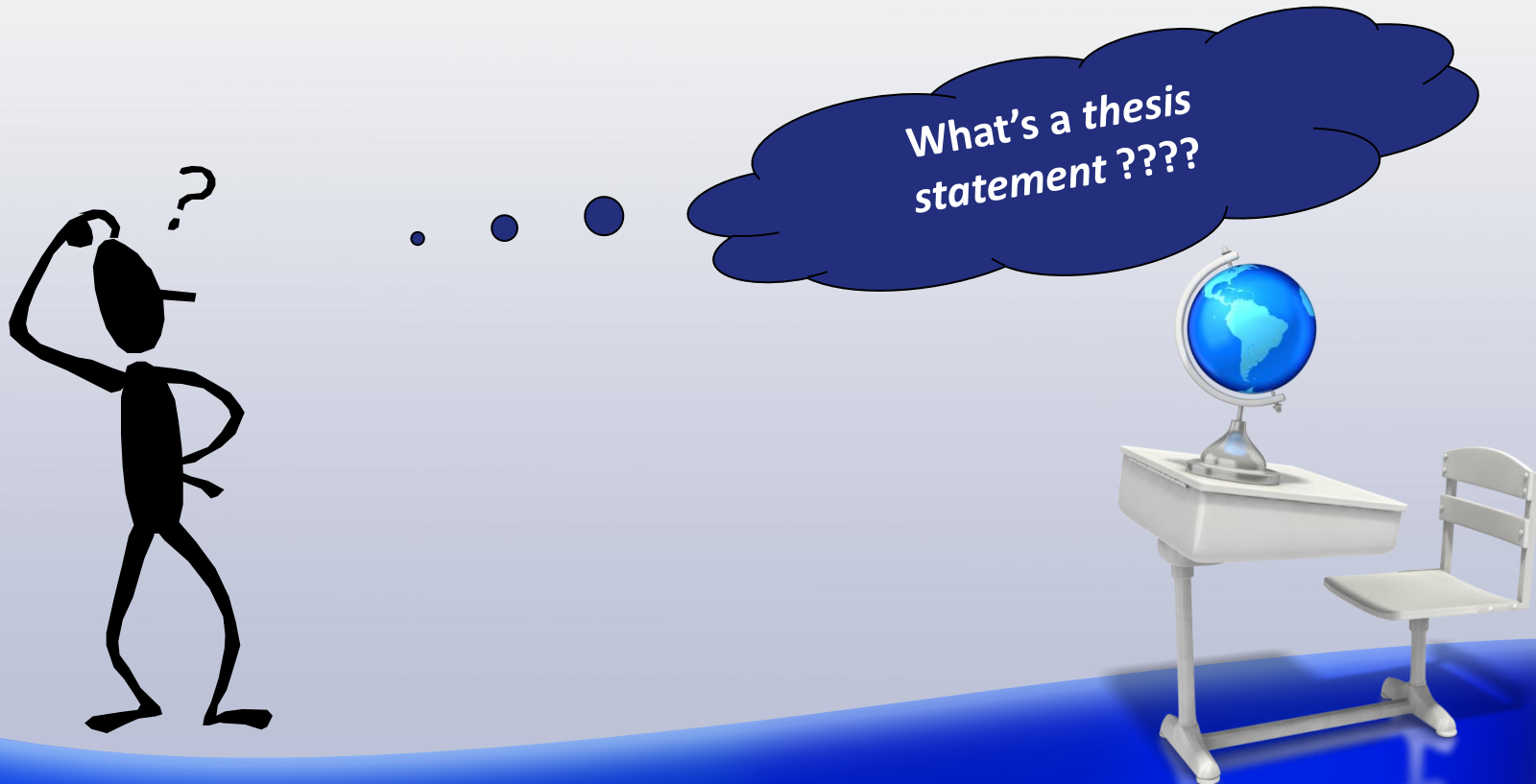
The Thesis Statement

A Road Map for Your Essay



Thesis Statements

After you have brainstormed and you have some main ideas of what you would like to write in your essay, you can begin thinking about writing a *thesis statement*.



Definition

Thesis Statement: The Essay's main idea

A thesis statement is a complete sentence that contains one main idea. This idea controls the content of the entire essay. A thesis statement that contains subpoints also helps a reader know how the essay will be organized. Look at the introductory paragraph below. See if you can identify the thesis statement and subpoints.



Key Features

More about thesis statements...

Since the thesis statement is the *main idea* for the entire essay, it should express a complete thought and be a complete sentence. The thesis statement is asserting an opinion or idea, so it should not be a question. The writer of the essay then uses the body paragraphs to prove the thesis. Look at the next examples to see how they can be made into thesis statements.



Key Features

Location

With the distinction of being the murder capital of the United States, Detroit, Michigan has come face to face with one of America's most pressing problems. With the majority of crimes and murders being related to drugs, narcotics use will remain a seriously destructive force in people's lives. **Long-term drug use can have disastrous effects on one's marriage, career, and health.**

The thesis statement comes at the end of the introductory paragraph. This sentence tells the reader that he/she can expect to read about ...three negative effects that result from drug use..



Thesis Statement

Another Example

Psychologists have argued for decades about how a person's character is formed. Numerous psychologists believe that one's birth order (i.e. place in the family as the youngest, oldest, or middle child) has the greatest influence. In fact, many believe birth order can have a significant impact in the formation of a child's character. Birth order can strongly affect one's relationship with parents, relationships with others, and how one views responsibility as an adult.

The thesis statement contains the main idea that controls the content of the essay.

Subpoints in the thesis or nearby help the reader know how the essay will be organized



Non-examples and Examples

How to revise weak thesis statements

~~The damage of oil spills.~~

← This is not a complete sentence.

The ongoing destruction caused by oil spills and leaks has resulted in two areas of environmental damage: decreased water quality and damage to marine animals.

Thesis
Statement

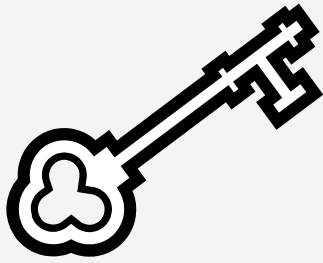
~~Why would someone want to clear cut land
and over log an area?~~

← This is a question, not a statement.

The practice of overlogging or excessively clear cutting a natural habitat for animals results in two effects: lack of adequate habitat for animals and increased soil erosion.

Thesis
Statement





Key Features

Thesis Statement Review

- ✓ States the main idea of the essay in a complete sentence, not in a question.
- ✓ Is at the end of an introduction.
- ✓ States an opinion or attitude on a topic.
- ✓ It doesn't just state the topic, itself.
- ✓ Lists the paper's subtopics.



Key Features

Why Add Subtopics to your Thesis?

You can make your thesis statement more specific by including subtopics or supporting ideas. By doing this, you give your reader a clear idea of what will follow in the body paragraphs of your essay.



Key Features

Adding Subtopics

The large influx of people to California has had major effects on the state.

No subtopics are named in this thesis statement.

subtopic #2

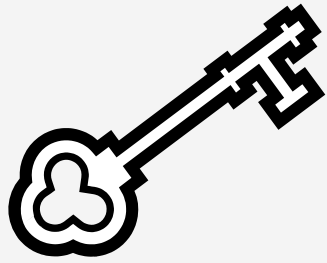
The large influx of people to California has had major effects on the ability of the state to provide housing, electricity, and jobs for all residents.

subtopic #3

subtopic #1

This statement names three subtopics. Can you find all of the subtopics?





Remember, learning something new is not always easy. Writing an opening paragraph with a thesis qualifies as “new.” With practice, you will soon master this skill. *Work at it. Learn something new!*

