 **Thesis Statements**

A thesis statement expresses the main idea of your paper. Some thesis statements offer readers a quick and easy to follow summary of what you as a writer are setting out to tell them.

This handout will include strategies for writing thesis statements for three common types of academic papers: expository, analytical, and argumentative.

**General Tips**

* A thesis statement generally consists of two parts: your topic, followed by the analysis, explanation(s), or assertion(s) that you're making about the topic.
* A thesis statement must be supported with reasons and evidence.
* Often, a thesis statement appears at the end of the first or second paragraph of a paper.
* As you write and revise your paper, it's okay to change your thesis statement – sometimes you don't discover what you really want to say about a topic until you've started (or finished) writing! Just make sure that your final thesis statement accurately reflects the main idea in your paper.
* You can make your thesis statement east to recognize by placing it at the end of the first paragraph. You can also call attention it: “The main point of the this paper is the following”

**Expository (Explanatory) Thesis Statements**

An expository paper explains something to the reader. An expository thesis statement explains:

1. What you are going to explain
2. The categories you are using to organize your explanation
3. The order in which you will be presenting your categories

*Example:* The primary habits of barn owls include hunting for insects and animals, building nests, and raising their young.

**Analytical Thesis Statements**

An analytical paper breaks down an issue or an idea into its component parts and evaluates the issue or idea for the reader. An analytical thesis statement explains:

1. What the paper will analyze
2. The parts of your analysis the reader should expect
3. The order in which the analysis will be presented

*Example:* An analysis of barn owl flight behavior reveals two kinds of flight patterns: patterns related to hunting prey and patterns related to courtship.

**(over)**

**Argumentative Thesis Statements**

An argumentative paper makes a claim about a topic and justifies this claim with reasons and evidence. This claim can be an opinion, a policy proposal, an evaluation, a cause-and-effect statement, or an interpretation.

An argumentative thesis statement tells your reader:

1. The claim or assertion
2. The reasons/evidence that support this claim
3. The order in which you will be presenting your reasons and evidence

*Example:* Barn owls' nests should not be eliminated from barns because barn owls help farmers by eliminating insect and rodent pests.