# Pen script logo Write Along #trentwritealong Developing your Thesis

# A good thesis should:

* Present the results of your investigation and/or make an argument, not a statement of intention. It is a statement of your informed opinion.

***NOT A THESIS:*** *This essay will examine the effects of media on women in government.*

***THESIS:*** *Media affects women in government by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

* Precisely and clearly state the central idea of the essay. Avoid ambiguity! Aim for one to two sentences to get your idea across.

***NOT A THESIS:*** *It is hard to say what become of Quebec’s spirit; the issue has remained unresolved*

*after years of debate.*

***THESIS:*** *Due to \_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, Quebec’s nationalist movements is now \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

* Present a proposition that can be supported by evidence. Avoid statements that are factual, overly subjective, or that over-state the case.

***NOT A THESIS:*** *Einstein was the greatest physicist of all time. All of his theories were, and continue to*

*be, foolproof.*

***THESIS:*** *Einstein’s theory of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ made an enduring and fundamental contribution to the field of  
 physics because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

# Getting started on a thesis:

A thesis begins with a topic. A topic is, broadly, what your essay is about. A thesis narrows the topic and makes a specific statement about it. A good way to move from topic to thesis is by asking questions about the topic: ask what, how, and why. Ask questions about causes, effects, categories, similarities, and differences. The answers to your questions are potential theses. See the following examples:

## Humanities

1. Topic: Gender equality and changing representations of gender
2. Question: What factors influence or reflect gender equality? How do they overlap or intersect?
3. Thesis: While the degree of female emancipation in a society is connected closely to the clothes that women wear, this connection is complex; it would not be true to say that a greater degree of political and economic freedom for women necessarily means freedom from uncomfortable and constraining clothes.

## Literature

1. Topic: Medieval plays
2. Question: What are the similarities and differences between two plays?
3. Thesis: Although one is a high-spirited comedy and the other a brutal tragedy, the medieval plays “The Nativity” and “The Crucifixion” explore a common theme: the intersection of the human and the divine.

## Science

1. Topic: Spread of an invasive species
2. Question: How does ecological niche impact the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer?
3. Thesis: The unusual climate preferences of the Emerald Ash Borer have slowed its invasion rate in Southwestern Ontario, providing the Canadian Food Inspection Agency the opportunity to control its spread.

## Reflective essays

1. Topic: Choose one theme from the course and reflect on how your thinking has changed about this theme over the course of the semester.
2. Questions: What course theme most interests me? Why? How/why has my thinking changed?
3. Thesis: In this course, I learned about …… and about…… Both changed the way I think about gender because they introduced the idea that…….. They affected my thinking because I had always thought …..and this made me see gender in a new way that ……

## Template

1. Topic: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. Question(s): What? How? Why? So What?
   1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
   3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Test your thesis:

* Could your reader present an opposing argument to your thesis? A thesis that presents an obvious idea or an idea that can’t be refuted prevents the development of a strong essay.
* Will you be able to explain and argue your thesis statement within the word count limit of the assignment? Your thesis statement may be excellent, but if it will take 20 pages to argue and you only have 8, it isn’t an appropriate thesis for the particular assignment. Consider scope!
* Ask the ***So What?*** Question! You want to argue something to which your reader can actually respond. If you ask “so what?” and nothing comes to mind, your thesis statement may be simply factual or may be arguing nothing of significance.