

Developing a Thesis

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement tells your reader the central message of your paper. A thesis should:

- State the main subject of the paper
- Convey the purpose of the paper
- Indicate the focus of the paper
- Use specific language, not vague or sweeping statements
- May indicate or state the major subdivisions of the paper's topic

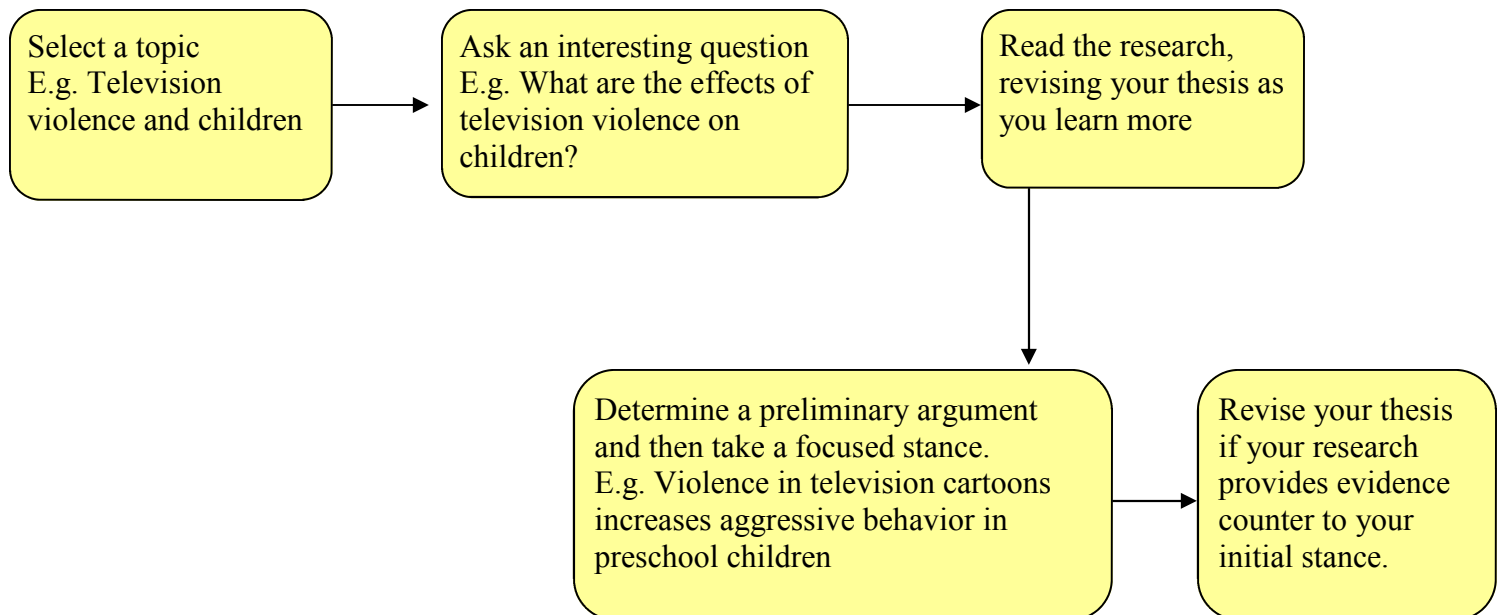
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As you research and explore your topic look for:

- Interesting contrasts or comparisons
- Relationships that are not apparent
- Strong arguments for or against an idea

Consider the following questions:

- Is there something about the topic that surprises you?
- Do you encounter ideas that make you wonder why?
- Does something an "expert" says make you respond, "No way! That can't be right!" or "Yes, absolutely. I agree!"?



Adapted from Valenza, J. K. (2003). What is a Thesis? In *Power research tools: Learning activities and posters* (p. 6-7). American Library Association.

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Adapted from Troyka, L. Q. (2002). What is a thesis statement? In *Simon & Schuster handbook for writers* (p. 37). Prentice Hall.