

## The 3 T's: Thesis Statement, Topic Sentence, & Transitional Sentence

### THESIS STATEMENT

The Central Message of your Essay:

- Establishes a boundary around the subject of the paper that helps keep the writer from straying from the topic
- A properly worded thesis can outline the paper and make the paper easier to write
- Gives the reader an idea of what to expect, thus making the paper easier to read
- Thesis Statement = Topic + Focus + Main Points

The Structure of the Thesis:

- Should be one long sentence
- Avoid vague wording
- Do not phrase it in the form of a question

When Formulating a Thesis Statement, Dr. Clack advises to:

- Pose the essay/theme question as a single broad question your essay/theme will answer
- Answer the question with a complete sentence; this is your thesis statement.
- List three main points which you will use to develop and prove your thesis; these will lead to topic sentences.

Example Thesis Statement:

- Vaguely worded thesis:  
*Cigarette smoking wreaks havoc on the body.* (Only states a fact)
- The improved version:  
*Cigarette smoking harms the body by constricting the blood vessels, accelerating the heartbeat, and activating excess gastric secretions in the stomach.*

(TURN OVER)

## TOPIC SENTENCE

Contains the Main Idea of the Paragraph

- EXAMPLE: *The blood vessels in a smoker's body are severely constricted because of the tar buildup from the cigarettes.*

Stay in Order of the Points Given in the Thesis Statement

- The first body paragraph should be the first subtopic, and so on.

## TRANSITIONAL SENTENCE

Acts as a Bridge:

- Links the subtopics and body paragraphs together to show the connection of each major point
- Takes the reader from one point and leads to the next
- Located in one of two places, either at the beginning of the paragraph (as a topic sentence) or at the end (as a summarization and transitional sentence). Check your professor's preference.
- Some transitional words and phrases: *as well as, likewise, therefore, yet, however, in contrast, in addition*, etc. (See Simon & Schuster Handbook for Writers, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., p. 94.)

This element is often overlooked the most by student writers but can easily unify an otherwise incongruent paper.

Example (moving from the paragraph about constricted blood vessels to a paragraph about an accelerated heartbeat):

- *Not only do the blood vessels become constricted, but the heartbeat is also accelerated to an unsafe level as well.*

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