**Tips for Constructing a Thesis Statement**

• A thesis statement should not contain two conflicting ideas. If two ideas are in conflict, it is impossible to support them both.

• A thesis statement should never be so broad that it’s difficult to discuss all of the relevant information.

 • A thesis statement is an assertion that requires evidence and support, not a universally agreed-upon fact or an observation.

 **A universally agreed-upon fact or an observation**: People use many lawn chemicals.

**Thesis**: People are poisoning the environment with chemicals merely to keep their lawns green.

• A thesis takes a stand rather than announcing a subject.

**Announcement:** The thesis of this paper is the difficulty of solving our environmental problems.

**Thesis:** Solving our environmental problems is more difficult than many environmentalists believe.

• A thesis is the main idea, not the title. It must be a complete sentence that expresses in some detail what claim you plan to support.

 **Title:** Social Security and Old Age

**Thesis:** Continuing changes in the Social Security System make it almost impossible to plan intelligently for retirement.

 • A thesis statement is narrow, rather than broad. If the thesis statement is sufficiently narrow, it can be fully supported.

**Broad:** The American steel industry has many problems.

**Narrow:** The primary problem of the American steel industry is the lack of funds to renovate outdated plants and equipment.

• A thesis statement is specific rather than vague or general.

**Vague:** Hemingway’s war stories are very good.

**Specific:** Hemingway’s stories helped create a new prose style by employing extensive dialogue, shorter sentences, and strong Anglo-Saxon words.

• A thesis statement has one main point rather than several main points. More than one point may be too difficult for the reader to understand and the writer to support.

**More than one main point:** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his public appearances have brought important attention to neurodegenerative diseases while also bringing popular attention to the field of theoretical physics.

**One main point:** Stephen Hawking’s status in the public eye has helped to revive a previously waning interest in theoretical physics.