

QUICK HINTS FOR DRAFTING A THESIS

1. State a clearly defined opinion on the topic. It is never a question.

Example: Do you think that we should have to pay a state sales tax?

Change to: Citizens should not have to pay a state sales tax due to the other avenues of revenue the state can draw upon for its budget.

2. Assert one main idea. Do not deal with multiple issues.

Example: Even though the Beatles had funky haircuts and were immortalized by John Lennon's assassination, Elvis could sing better, dance more rhythmically, and create a frenzied crowd more effectively than the Beatles.

Change to: Elvis could sing better, dance more rhythmically, and create a frenzied crowd more effectively than any other singer(s) between the late 1950's - 1970's.

3. Lead to a discussion in the rest of the essay. Do not just state a fact.

Example: B.B. King is a well-known blues singer.

Change to: B.B. King's unique style and immense talent enabled him to become the most well-known blues singer and guitarist in American history.

4. Limit the scope of the assignment. Do not include irrelevant material.

Example: The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, the one that held the hearing that included Bill Gates and the owner of Dell Computers, Michael Dell, who is, by the way, very young, has the difficult task of confirming federal judicial nominees.

Change to: The U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee can be very contentious, an attribute that often makes holding hearings and confirming federal judges difficult.

5. Make the statement in specific, clear terms. Do not clutter it with fuzzy, trite phrases.

Example: In my opinion, I truly believe and am totally convinced that for the most part, students should not have to, at least not usually, buy parking stickers.

Change to: Because students already pay tuition and fees at their universities and colleges, they should not be required to purchase parking stickers.

6. Make an accurate forecast of what is to come but not a flat announcement of topic.

Example: This essay will be about the life of John F. Kennedy.

Change to: John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign call for economic growth formed a significant element of his administration's overall goals for improving America.

7. Be rational and reasonable in tone and diction. No name calling!

Example: Any idiot who thinks that guns should be banned from the private sector deserves to be an outcast.

Change to: While violence in America has certainly increased in the past decade, further restrictions on gun ownership will not necessarily solve this problem.