



Making sure that you follow the 'algebraic equation' idea when writing your thesis statement should help you avoid making vague statements or mere observations. Take a look at some other rules you should follow when writing a thesis statement.

***Make an Assertion, Not an Observation or Fact***

**NO** Ernest Hemingway's novel, The Old Man and the Sea, is about a fisherman and a fish.

**YES** In his novel The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway uses a fisherman's efforts at catching a fish as a symbol to represent the futility of chasing one's dreams.

***Be Specific, Never Vague***

**NO** The novel The Old Man and the Sea is good.

**YES** In the novel The Old Man and the Sea, Ernest Hemingway effectively uses language techniques to develop a new writing style.

***It Should Be Limited and Narrow, Not Broad***

**NO** Drugs are being used to treat all mental illnesses.

**YES** Due to its risks and negative side effects, the drug lithium is not an effective way to treat depression.

***It Should Have One Main Point, Not Several***

**NO** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist, and his book is the subject of a movie.

**YES** Stephen Hawking's physical disability has not prevented him from becoming a world-renowned physicist.

It's okay if you have to revise your thesis statement as you're writing the paper. If you are having trouble coming up with arguments to support your thesis, it is much easier to change the thesis than to change the entire paper. It often happens that a writer only realizes the point or direction of the paper during the process of writing the paper, so let yourself feel comfortable altering the thesis; it is not set in stone. Just make sure that your final thesis statement properly reflects what you have written about in the essay.