

Part 4: Narrowing Down Your Information and Constructing a Proper Thesis

Narrowing Down Your Information:

After you have collected your information, read through it and evaluate the material to decide how you can use it to present a coherent idea or insight about the topic that you have chosen.

Do not try to fit in everything that you have found during your research.

Professors are not looking for a paper that repeats all of the information on a general subject. They are expecting you to choose the appropriate information from your larger body of research to present a precise and clear interpretation of a central idea. You are expected to come up with a single point of view that can be proven based on the information that you have selected from your research. This will be your thesis statement.

Remember, your thesis must be something that is arguable. It cannot be a statement that simply presents a fact or tells the reader what you intend to do through the course of your essay.

Constructing a Proper Thesis:

A proper thesis can only be constructed once you have considered all of the information at your disposal. You must have finished your research before you can set out to write a proper Thesis statement for your essay.

Your thesis should be arguable. A statement of intention is not a thesis statement.

At this point you have accomplished the following tasks:

- 1) Chosen your topic
- 2) Gathered your information through your readings and research
- 3) Narrowed down your topic so that you have a specific aspect of your topic that you have chosen to write about.

Now you have to decide what you think about that specific aspect and write that down in a precise and well-ordered sentence. This will be your Thesis.

Your Thesis statement is the point that your central argument and the organization of all of the material within your essay supports.

Your Thesis must be clear and concise.

Your Thesis must be contained within a single sentence.

We will use the same examples that were presented in the above section and move to the formulation of a Thesis statement.

Example #1:

Topic –

Write an essay that illustrates the importance of the ideal of Love in Petronius' "The Widow of Ephesus".

Definition –

Love is an affectionate emotional bond between people.

Specific Aspects –

- 1) the town's perspective on the love between the widow and her husband and then the widow and the soldier.
- 2) on the nature of love in the relationship between the widow and her departed husband.
- 3) on the nature of love in the relationship between the widow and the soldier.

Each of these are **specific aspects** of the different types of ideals of love that can be found between characters in the story.

For your Thesis, you must take some time to reflect on what you think is the **importance** of these different types of ideals of love as they are found between characters in the story.

Possible Thesis Statements –

- 1) The importance of the town's perspective on the love between the Widow and her Husband and then the Widow and the soldier is that the her love has developed from the ideal of fidelity to her husband to the living reality of the sacrifice of her past to experience the miracle of love with the soldier.
- 2) The importance of the nature of love in the relationship between the Widow and her departed Husband is that of the perfect ideal of fidelity and commitment.
- 3) The importance of the nature of love in the relationship between the Widow and the soldier is one of survival and sacrifice.

Or

Example #2

Topic –

Write an essay about the importance of duty in Herman Melville's "Bartleby the Scrivener".

Definition –

By definition, duty is the obligation that an individual or group feels in relation to a principle, a goal, or another individual or group of people.

Specific Aspects –

- 4) Bartleby's public duty as a member of an industrial consumer society.
- 5) Bartleby's professional duty as an employee of the law firm.
- 6) Bartleby's social duty to his fellow employees and his employer.
- 7) Bartleby's personal duty to himself.

Each of these are **specific aspects** of the different types of duty that can be found within the story.

For your Thesis, you must take some time to reflect on what you think is the **importance** of these different types of duty as they are found between Bartleby and the different characters in the story.

Possible Thesis Statements –

- Bartleby cannot reconcile his self-interest with the interests of an industrial consumer society and this results in his incarceration.
- Bartleby defies his professional duty as an employee of the law firm and this results in his personal downfall as a member of the firm and as a member of society.
- Bartleby's personal duty is in direct opposition to his duty to his fellow employees and his employer and this results in his downfall professional downfall and incarceration.
- Bartleby's chooses to honour his personal duty to himself instead of participating in a consumer industrial society as a constructive professional and this results in his downfall and his incarceration.

Often, students will be faced with a choice between several possible points that can be effectively argued based on the information that they have gathered. Choose the perspective that you agree with the most. If you are still faced with several choices, choose the one that you feel you can argue most effectively based on the information that you have and the length of your argument.

You should have a Thesis before they can begin to construct an effective outline. You must know what you want to prove before you can set about constructing a plan that will effectively support your Thesis argument.