

THESIS STATEMENT

*****ALWAYS USE THE MAGIC FORMULA*****

Choose one of the magic words – Despite/Although/Even though + the general idea/topic or counter-argument, ← (include the comma) + the topic of your essay or your argument.

Let's say the essay prompt is as follows:

A well-known football coach once said, "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you state your position and support it with convincing reasons.

STEP ONE: choose one of the magic words - Despite

STEP TWO: state the general idea/topic – winning and sports, (don't forget the comma)

STEP THREE: write your opinion or the point you will be arguing/displaying in the essay – more can be learned from being part of a team than from winning a game

STEP FOUR: put all of the steps together into a scholarly and effective thesis statement:

THESIS: Despite the popular belief that the only goal in sports is to win, the positive effects of learning to work together as a team is the ultimate benefit of being involved in sports.

- Can you identify each of the steps in the magic formula in the thesis statement above? PROVE IT!

82. PARAGRAPHS AND PAPERS: The Thesis Sentence

(Study 94B, Forming a Thesis)

First, from the list below, **identify** the main weakness in each thesis sentence, and write the letter of that weakness in the short blank. Then, in the long blanks, **rewrite** the thesis sentence so that it is usable for an essay. (For the purposes of this exercise, you may invent facts or ideas as needed.)

- A—no assertion
- B—split focus
- C—too broad, too vague, or unsupported
- D—stale, uninteresting to U.S. collegians

Examples: Our nation's social problems need solving now. C
Our college has a moral obligation to use part of its endowment to relieve local poverty.
The Antarctic is one of the coldest places on earth. A
Despite its inhospitable climate, new scientific advances hold promise for making the Antarctic a desirable place for people to live.

(Collaborative option: Students work in pairs or small groups to evaluate thesis sentences and compose new ones.)

1. Canada is actually larger than the United States. 1. _____

2. Radio can be more entertaining than television, and radio commercials are more profitable for sponsors than those on TV. 2. _____

3. Spring is a lovely time of year. 3. _____

4. Studying the types of sand in Mongolia's Gobi Desert can be rewarding. 4. _____

87. PARAGRAPHS AND PAPERS: Research Paper Topics and Theses

(Study 96A, Choosing and Limiting a Topic, and 96B, Forming a Thesis)

Part 1

If the topic is **suitable** for a research paper, write **Y** (for **yes**) in the blank. If the topic is **not suitable**, write the **letter of the reason** in the blank. (For some items there is more than one possible correct answer.)

- A—too broad, vague, or speculative
- B—not researchable or completable with available resources
- C—unable to be treated objectively

Example: Poland's transition from communism to capitalism, 1985–1995

_____ **Y** _____

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Muslim-Christian conflicts since the year 1000 | 1. _____ |
| 2. Is there intelligent life in our solar system? | 2. _____ |
| 3. Attitudes toward wealth in F. Scott Fitzgerald's story "The Rich Boy" | 3. _____ |
| 4. The coming triumph of feminism | 4. _____ |
| 5. The torch is passed: the effects of the 1960 presidential election on the Cold War | 5. _____ |
| 6. Symbols in the writings of Willa Cather | 6. _____ |
| 7. New treatments of athletic knee injuries in girls and women | 7. _____ |
| 8. Devil worship: the one true religion | 8. _____ |
| 9. Voting patterns of current freshmen at this college in public elections | 9. _____ |
| 10. The collapse of communism as seen through the eyes of selected average Russians | 10. _____ |
| 11. The ruination of America's moral standards through unrestricted use of the Internet | 11. _____ |
| 12. The decline in foreign trade as a cause of the Great Depression | 12. _____ |
| 13. The Great Depression: it could happen again | 13. _____ |
| 14. The interstate highway system in our state, 1955–1975: boon or boondoggle? | 14. _____ |

Part 2

In the short blank, write **Y** (for **yes**) if the thesis sentence is a **workable** one for a research paper. Write **N** (for **no**) if it is **not**. Then, after each sentence for which you wrote **N**, write in the long blank a workable thesis sentence on the same topic.

1. F. Scott Fitzgerald, in his story "The Rich Boy," conveys ambivalent attitudes toward wealth. 1. _____

2. The U.S. election of 1960 radically changed the history of the world. 2. _____

3. Throughout *Huckleberry Finn*, the Mississippi River can be seen as Mark Twain's symbol for life and freedom. 3. _____

4. The lost continent of Atlantis lies just off the sea in the Bermuda Triangle, waiting to be discovered. 4. _____

5. The Second Vatican Council played only a secondary role in the widespread defection of U.S. Catholics in the 1960s and '70s. 5. _____

6. Despite being maligned by critics, current afternoon TV talk shows tend to raise the cultural level of all their viewers. 6. _____

7. The present family court system in this county often harms the very people it is intended to help. 7. _____

8. The U.S. Electoral College should be replaced by direct popular vote because the College system distorts vote totals.

8. _____

9. Shakespeare's works really had to have been written by Francis Bacon because Bacon was educated and Shakespeare was not.

9. _____

10. Devil worship has grown in the U.S. in recent years primarily because of its appeal to alienated youth.

10. _____

11. Massive urban renewal projects in the 1960s and 1970s failed throughout the nation; I know because I grew up in one of them.

11. _____
