

Developing a Working Thesis

A working thesis can help guide your research, reading and writing, and it's important that you try to develop one early on in your work so that you have some sense of direction for your work. You are likely (and even strongly encouraged) to modify your working thesis statement based on what you discover while you are writing. There can often be a big difference between what your working thesis argues, and what your paper ends up arguing.

Developing a working thesis can help you figure out what further information you need to provide in your essay and help you decide on the order of your ideas, what further arguments you might make, or even what information turns out to be unnecessary.

One way to generate a working thesis is to complete the following sentence in relation to the question you hope your essay will answer:

At this point I think I am going to argue **that...**

Your working thesis should **state your position** on a topic, and not simply present a topic.

A working thesis should state the position you plan to take on your topic: "At this point I am going to argue that judges must have the ability to take individual factors into account in determining an appropriate sentence and that mandatory sentences should not be legislated."

Remember, your thesis statement prepares your reader for the arguments and information that will follow in the essay. It typically provides a succinct response to the question you wish to answer with the essay.