Thesis Statements

The last sentence of your introduction is called the thesis statement, and it is the most important sentence in the entire essay, in terms of structure. The thesis statement guides and controls the direction of the entire essay.

A thesis statement:

* is one sentence,
* gives the *topic* of your essay,
* the *controlling idea*, or your point of view about that topic
* Example of a thesis statement:

**Topic**: Learning to cope with anxiety

**Controlling idea:** has allowed me to enjoy life more and be more in tune with myself.

**The importance of having a good thesis statement cannot be overstated.**  Since writing is putting your ideas into written form, the thesis statement is the very core of your ideas reduced into one sentence. If it is too general or vague, your essay will lack direction and be hard to follow (and hard to write!)

Thesis statements are never perfect after the first draft. Possibly more than any other part of the essay, they need to be revised and reworked until you’re satisfied with it.

**Exercise 1** In small groups, identify the **problems** with the following thesis statements.

1. Problems in life often lead to personal growth.
2. I would like to discuss how I came to learn about a quality I possess.
3. Playing on a sports team taught me a lot about life.
4. Final exam week last semester was the most stressful time of my life.
5. Did finding a hobby improve my mental health?