At the college level, most of the essays you will write will require a **thesis statement**.

The **thesis statement** is the **main argument** of your paper. It tells your reader what you intend to prove to them. In order to write strong papers, you will have to know how to state an argument and then support it.

Thesis statements typically must include two elements: the **topic** of the paper and the **claim** you plan to make.

- The topic of the paper is its subject, or what the paper is about. For example, in the thesis statement “Roasting a chicken is very easy,” the topic is “roasting a chicken.
- The claim the paper makes is your argument. In the above example, the claim this thesis statement makes is that it is easy to roast a chicken.

A thesis statement **must contain an argument**. Without that, it is not a thesis statement. The following sentences are not thesis statements:

- In this paper, I will discuss chicken.
- This is how to roast a chicken.

Thesis statements typically go at the end of the introduction paragraph in an essay. This is so that your reader can quickly see what your argument is.

When writing a thesis statement, ask yourself these questions to make sure it works:

- Does my thesis statement **make an argument**?
- Can I **support my argument**?

Make sure your thesis statement is not just a statement of a fact or of your topic.
PRACTICE

Decide whether the following statements are thesis statements or not. If not, explain why.

1. This paper will discuss the dangers of flying on airplanes.

2. Flying on airplanes is more dangerous than most people realize.

3. America's educational system is failing.

4. America has a public education system.

Want to check your work? Bring this worksheet to the English Center and ask a tutor to go over it with you.