

Growing an Argumentative Thesis

Prompt: Discuss and form a researched argument on a commonly debated issue in the media.

Beginning thesis: I hate genetically modified food.

Tips for Growth! Make sure you pay attention to what the prompt is asking! Look for helpful keywords like a detective looks for clues. If the prompt asks you to reflect on your personal beliefs and values, this may be the start of an appropriate thesis. However, if you're being asked to argue a position, your personal opinions or feelings on the topic do not form a proper thesis.



Budding thesis: Genetically modified food is food that has been modified genetically.

Tips for Growth! The statement above is a fact. If you're being asked to argue a position, your thesis should be a statement that someone else could potentially disagree with or argue about. If you're not sure whether your thesis is arguable, try asking questions, such as "Is this a statement that can be challenged or questioned? Is this something that a reader could contradict?"



Blooming thesis: Genetically modified food is unhealthy.

Tips for Growth! While this thesis gives readers a broad understanding of what argument the writer is going to make, it should be a bit narrower in the actual essay. The argument could be strengthened with more specific wording and more information. Without a specific thesis, the reader may have questions such as, "Are the modified organisms themselves unhealthy, or is it unhealthy for other organisms to eat them?" that should ideally be answered in the thesis.



Beautiful Thesis! While there may be economic benefits to growing genetically modified crops, there are negative health consequences for the people who consume them and for the farmers who produce them.

This thesis is a great first step to writing an essay. It addresses the prompt, provides an argument, and includes wording that is clear and precise. The thesis provides an outline of what the writer will be talking about throughout the remainder of the paper.



How to Create an Argumentative Thesis

Create a clear, firm, and debatable thesis.

- A thesis statement should identify a specific purpose. (What is your topic/main idea, the point you want to show or prove about your topic or issue?)
- A thesis statement should be clear and is generally placed towards the end of the introduction. It is usually one sentence, but can be two or three.

You can come up with your thesis after you gather your information. A thesis may be a conclusion you draw as a result of doing research, your answer to a puzzling question, or a claim you will explain and support. ***In other words, you can work on your thesis later!***

What is your topic? _____

Ex: Child obesity in the United States.

Perform effective and thorough research.

- What do you know about your topic so far?
- What sources have you found that support/prove a possible argument?
- Any counter arguments?
- **List important information.**
Ex: There are a higher percentage of obese children compared to last year.
(DON'T FORGET TO CITE YOUR SOURCES IN YOUR PAPER!)

Take a stand!

- What is your point of view?
- What changes should or should not be made and why?
- What evidence supports your point of view?
- This is where you convince your audience to take your point of view.

What is your thesis?

Ex: Adding healthier foods in our school system will decrease the obesity rates in school-aged children.

- Does your thesis focus on a substantive issue, one that grabs the reader's attention?
- Is it current and relevant? Will readers care about the issue it addresses?
- Is it debatable? Could reasonable people disagree with it?
- Is it clearly stated? Do you take a stand?
- Can it be supported by evidence from your research or personal experience?