

## The Difference between Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences

### Writing a thesis statement:

The thesis statement tells the reader what the rest of the paper is about. A thesis statement is a fact you want to prove or a fact you want to explain. The rest of your paper's job is to prove or explain what you just wrote in your thesis statement.

Example:

### **There are several ways for college students to improve their study habits.**

This thesis statement tells me a couple things:

1. The paper is about **college students' study habits**.
2. The rest of the paper will show me ways to **improve** study habits.

The thesis statement is the big idea of your whole paper! The rest of the paper is facts about how your thesis statement is true.

### Writing a topic sentence:

The topic sentence is different from your thesis statement.

**The thesis statement tells what the whole paper is about. The topic sentence, however, shows only what the paragraph it is attached to is about.**

Let's look at the following example:

Your thesis statement was "There are several ways for college students to improve their study habits."

These are a few ideas of how college students can improve their study:

1. Study in a quiet environment.
2. Pay attention in class.
3. Manage their time well.

All three of these ideas could be discussed further, and they all explain the thesis statement. What are the ways students can improve their study habits? By studying in a quiet environment, paying attention in class, and managing their time well.

Each of these three ideas can become a **topic sentence**. This means that for each idea, there will be a paragraph that explains it.