

## **Thesis Construction: A Quick and Dirty Primer**

Remember that a good thesis is your entry point into academic discourse. In other words, it's an absolutely essential component for the production of new and interesting ideas as well as a crucial textual feature which allows readers to see how new and interesting your ideas really are.

### **TOPIC:**

Find a RELEVANT topic that is interesting to both you and (we hope) your audience.

### **QUESTION:**

Ask a GOOD question: one that is debatable, interesting, and/or has not been sufficiently answered in the past.

### **ANSWERS:**

WRITE out as many relevant answers to the question as you can. You should be striving for quantity at this point, not quality. Now go take a break.

### **TRASH:**

After your break, come back to the answers and THROW OUT all but the very best ones.

### **THESIS:**

REWRITE your good question into a statement and add in your good answers.

Ex: What is the best flavor of ice cream? → The best flavor of ice cream is chocolate chip mint.

### **QUALITY:**

Ask yourself, would any reasonable person DISAGREE with my thesis? If not, then your thesis is probably not very argumentative and should be thrown away. The thesis you replace it with needs to answer (at least tentatively) a debatable question and needs to be interesting to your audience.

### **SCOPE:**

Okay, so you've got a good thesis! Now consider the SIZE of the project your thesis needs. Is your thesis so big that you'll need to write a 200 page book in order to adequately address all the relevant issues? Or, is your thesis small enough to be adequately handled in less than 2 pages? Thinking about scope can help you determine whether or not you are on the right track, and many (though not all) thesis statements can be easily modified so that you are making an argument which is appropriate to the size of the project at hand.