

SEVEN ERRORS TO AVOID WHEN COMPOSING A THESIS

1. A thesis cannot be a fragment; it must be expressed in a sentence.
Poor: How life is in the inner city.
Better: Residents of the inner city tend to have higher death rates, higher disease rates, and higher psychosis rates than do any other residents of Canadian cities.
2. A thesis must not be in the form of a question. (Usually the answer to that question could be the thesis.)
Poor: Should eighteen-year-olds have the right to vote?
Better: Anyone who is old enough to fight a war is old enough to vote.
3. A thesis must not contain such phrases as *I think*. (They merely weaken the statement.)
Poor: In my opinion most men wear beards because they are trying to find themselves.
Better: The current beard fad may be an attempt on the part of men to emphasize their male identity.
4. A thesis must not contain elements that are not clearly related.
Poor: All novelists seek the truth; therefore some novelists are good psychologists.
Better: In their attempt to probe human nature, many novelists appear to be good psychologists.
5. A thesis must not be expressed in vague language.
Poor: Some people do not think wage and price controls did too much for inflation, despite the politicians saying it would.
Better: Contrary to what politicians believed, wage and price controls did not stop inflation.
6. A thesis must not be expressed in muddled or incoherent language.
Poor: All students should not think that university is for everyone, because for many people they have a career that high school was all they needed.
Better: Students should realize that many people have good careers without having attended university.
7. A thesis should not be written in figurative language.
Poor: Love is the rose in the garden of our existence.
Better: Love is the true basis of human happiness.