

Guidelines: Structuring a Paper around a Thesis

- Remember the purpose of a thesis: the argument you will be proving in your paper.
 - It is not simply an introduction or a space in which to list everything you know on the topic.
 - It can be longer than a sentence, but try not to ramble.
- Keep it Simple—make sure your thesis is clear and concise. Creativity is always a plus, but first and foremost, make sure the professor can follow your argument.
- Use your own, unique point of view when constructing a thesis.
 - You don't have to bend over backwards to write something no one has ever read before. Your thesis is the way you see it based on the class text and lectures.
 - Example: feel strongly that Hamlet was deeply in love with his mother? If you think you can make a case for it, do.
- Work backwards—if you're having trouble coming up with a concise argument, write about the things that stand out to you based on what you've learned.
 - Often, an argument will form itself.
 - You can always go back and edit out the unneeded text.
- Remember each paragraph should build on itself.
 - Imagine paragraphs as blocks, forming the basis of your thesis.
 - Don't write paragraphs that are unrelated to your thesis. Remember: this is not a chance to write everything you know, this is a chance to build a case for your argument.
- Your conclusion should say something new, but not unrelated.
 - It should not simply restate your thesis in different words.
 - It should leave the reader with a final, interesting thought or revelation.

Above all else: keep it simple and clear. Don't put too much pressure on yourself—trust your own opinions.