



Writing at Macalester College

The MAX Center

Helping underprepared students prepare,
prepared students advance,
and advanced students excel.

MAX Center Hours (Academic Year)

Days: Monday – Friday, 9 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.

Evenings: Sunday – Thursday, 7 P.M. – 10 P.M.

The MAX Center is on the first floor of Kagin Commons. Tutoring is free of charge.

- Tutors available during most of the day and during all evening hours.
- Drop-ins and appointments available.
- Make an appointment to guarantee you a time.
- Daytime phone number: 696-6121
- Evening phone number: 696-6193

A Handbook for First Year Students



Brought to you by the Writing Tutors of the
Macalester Academic Excellence (MAX) Center
Kagin Commons



Notes

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MAX Center staff:

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Director, Math Counselor

Becky Graham

Writing and Study Skills Counselor

Sedric McClure

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Writing Counselor

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Sincere thanks to Academic Programs and Ann Minnick
for supporting this project.

Wow! That Helps!
The Best Websites on Writing

The OWL (Online Writing Lab) at Purdue

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

- The OWL at Purdue, an excellent writing website, provides help on writing, research, grammar, MLA and APA style, thesis statements, sentence clarity, and coping with writing anxiety.

University of Kansas Writing Center

www.writing.ku.edu

- The Assignment Planner allows you to plug in your paper's due date and receive a schedule of what to accomplish each day. It includes links to advice for the entire writing process.
- The Sample Writing Gallery provides examples of actual papers in a variety of disciplines with remarks about proper formatting in the margins.

Dave's ESL Café

www.eslcafe.com

- This site is must-see for international students. It contains advice on American idioms and slang, quizzes on articles and adverbs, a chat room, a help center, and ESL links.

Dartmouth Writing Program

www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/materials/about

- Especially useful are the pages on writing papers in specific fields, everything from art history to sociology.

The road to hell is paved with adverbs.

~ Stephen King

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More Macalester Resources

The Humanities Resource Center (HRC):

(First Floor, Humanities Building, x6336)

- The HRC is a computer lab with a color printer.
- The HRC is geared primarily toward digital imaging, digital audio, Web design and foreign language instructional use.
- The HRC has equipment for foreign language word processing (Russian, Hebrew, Arabic, and Japanese) and spell checkers (French, German, Portuguese and Spanish).

Media Services:

(Fourth Floor, Humanities Building, x 6377)

<http://www.macalester.edu/mediaservices/>

- Media Services provides professional educational media support to Macalester academic programs and students.
- Media Services has video and audio equipment and provides help with posters, photography, video and audio production.
- Media Services has a collection of over 3,000 titles in their video and film library and access to media from other area colleges.
- All videos are listed in CLICnet.
- Videos are available to view for free or to check out with faculty permission.

Computer Labs:

<http://www.macalester.edu/infoservices/labs/index.html>

- Find computer labs in the Library, Kagin, and Dupre; in addition, Kirk has a 24-hour computer lab that can be accessed with a student ID.
- Many of Macalester's academic departments maintain their own computer facilities. Each facility typically contains discipline-specific software and hardware, geared toward the unique needs and scholarly focus of the host department.

Do not put statements in the negative form.

And don't start sentences with a conjunction.

If you reread your work, you will find on rereading that a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.

Never use a long word when a diminutive one will do.

Unqualified superlatives are the worst of all.

De-accession euphemisms.

If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.

Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.

Last, but not least, avoid clichés like the plague.

~ William Safire, "Great Rules of Writing"

Databases

- The database link on the library website allows you to use databases for locating materials specifically appropriate for your research needs.
- Some of the most commonly used databases are JSTOR, Academic Search Premier, and Project MUSE.

Guides

- **Course Guides** are developed for current semester courses if the instructor requests an instruction session for the class. They are archived for one semester. Clicking the link for your course also introduces you to the reference librarian who specializes in that particular subject.
- **Subject Guides** allow you to click on a specific subject area where you will find some of the databases that are most appropriate for your specific subject.
- **Guide to Books** helps you locate books available not only from the DeWitt Wallace Library but also from other libraries within the network.
- **Citing and Writing Resources** provides links to style and citation manuals for the several documentation styles; in addition, it provides links to General Style Guides and Writing Guides and Manuals.

The library also offers an “Ask Us” feature on their website so that you can chat with a librarian online.



*I want to write books that unlock
the traffic jam in everybody's head.*

~ John Updike

Dear First-Years,

As writing tutors at Macalester, we see many papers every year from a wide range of students. Over time, the same concerns come up again and again. We thought first-year students might appreciate a heads-up on what to expect when writing at Macalester. After all, we are students ourselves; we've each had personal experiences with writing in many disciplines.

We hope that this guide gives you a good foundation to build upon, and we invite you to come in to the MAX Center and see us!

The MAX Center Writing Tutors of 2011-2012:

Anna Springfield

Caitlin Opperman

Diane Rubin

Dianna Amasino

Jane Bonsall

Jonathan McJunkin

Juliet Jacobs

Leigh Bercaw

Luke Allen

Matea Wasend

Nora Kassner

Omar El Zoheiry

Rachel Voit

Rebecca Schultz

Samantha Gupta

Sarah Mintz

Wren Brennan



Check Out the Library!

DeWitt Wallace Library www.macalester.edu/library/

One of the very first places you should go when you come to Macalester is the DeWitt Wallace Library. You will find an incredible number of resources, including energetic, knowledgeable librarians who are eager to help you find the materials you need for your course work.

Library Staff

- The library staff members are available for consultations on research projects. You can set up an appointment online, by phone, or at the reference desk.
- Librarians can also help you figure out how to use the online resources and approach research more generally.

The library has several online resources for writing and researching. The following resources can assist you during the writing process:

RefWorks is an incredibly useful personal database for storing citations and creating bibliographies.

To use:

1. Go to the library home page; select **Refworks** under the “**YourAccounts**” tab.
2. Create a user account.
3. Use RefWorks with an add-on, **Write-N-Cite**, for formatting the resources in your paper.

*Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well.*

~ Duke of Buckinghamshire Sheffield

- Pay attention to the errors you make frequently. Next time, don't make them; you'll have less work to do.
- Spell check and then check your spelling. Be on the lookout for homophone misuse, such as using *it's* for *its*.
- Read the paper backwards, one sentence at a time, to force the sentence out of context, making it easier for you to identify typos and silly errors.
- Ask someone else to read your paper, preferably out loud.

Reduce wordiness.

The MAX Center has a handout that explains how to eliminate wordiness in your writing. Try these basic strategies:

- Avoid using *it is*, *there is*, and *there are* at the beginning of sentences.
- Replace passive verbs with active verbs.
- Watch for redundancies: *first and foremost*, *past memories*, *true facts*.



I am returning this otherwise good typing paper to you because someone has printed gibberish all over it and put your name at the top.

*~ English Professor (Name Unknown) Ohio
University*

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Take it to the MAX!

A Tutor can help you with many things:

- Identifying audience and purpose
- Brainstorming, outlining, freewriting
- Building on pre-writing materials
- Organizing your paper
- Focusing on specific sections of a paper
- Adjusting the thesis to fit the body and vice versa
- Discussing evidence and support for the thesis
- Checking for “flow” and transitions
- Determining how the tone fits the audience
- Clarifying sentences

A Friendly Notice:

Although we are not a proofreading service, we are happy to work with you on editing and proofreading your own work. We can point out common errors in your writing and demonstrate how to correct them, and we can help you understand how to document your sources correctly.



“I’ll have the misspelled ‘Ceasar’ salad and the improperly hyphenated veal osso-buco.”

Does This Make Sense? Proofreading for Yourself

Proofreading is an essential but undervalued step in the writing process. Students tend to think running the Spell Check once before printing is good enough, or they simply skip it entirely.

On the other hand, asking a fellow student to proofread your papers has its own risks; the student may be rushed or inattentive, not know how to proofread, or tell you incorrect answers as revenge for playing your opera music in the dorm too loudly the week before.

As MAX Center tutors, we will help you edit and proofread your own writing. Our goal is to help you become a better writer, not to edit your paper for you. Your best bet is to learn to proofread your own papers. This section contains some tips for making proofreading your papers easier.

Tips:

- Allow yourself time between finishing your writing and proofreading. Take a break and head over to the Grill for your favorite snack. Just don’t forget to come back and proofread your paper!
- Read your paper aloud. (Be courteous of other students. You probably wouldn’t be too happy with someone who stood up in the middle of the library and recited a paper.)

Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
~ Author Unknown

Make sure that each paragraph has the following:

- **A Point** (a claim, assertion, or observation around which the paragraph revolves)
- **Examples or Evidence** that illustrate or support the point
- **Explanation** of how the paragraph directly supports or illustrates your thesis statement.

Read your final product over for grammatical errors and/or ask a friend to proofread.

Refer to the next section for proofreading techniques.

TIP: Take breaks from working on your paper. When you return to your paper, you will see it with fresh eyes and will likely catch mistakes you previously missed.



Read over your compositions, and when you meet a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.

~ Samuel Johnson, "Recalling the Advice of a College Tutor," Boswell, Life of Johnson, 1791

Getting the Most Out of Your MAX Experience

1. You may schedule an appointment or drop-in, but, either way, please allow us enough time to read your paper and go over it with you. Tutoring sessions are scheduled for one hour in length, so it's great if you can give us a copy of your draft before the appointment time, especially if it's a long paper.
2. Bring your assignment sheet and syllabus with you so that you and the tutor can talk about how well your draft is addressing the assignment.
3. Know what you're looking for. Tell your tutor what you are most concerned about, such as organization or thesis or documentation.
4. Keep an open mind. Be open to tutors' feedback and ideas, and remember: they are only suggesting other possibilities. Tutors aren't always familiar with your subject; you are the best judge of what will work. Ask questions, clarify suggestions, and feel free to disagree.
5. Do your best to come in well before your final draft is due. Meeting with a tutor a few times during the process of writing your paper will help keep you on schedule.



Profiles of Some of Our Writing Tutors

Caitlin Opperman

A senior from Denver, Colorado, Caitlin is a Psychology major who believes that the most important things for writing a good paper are a large bag of peanut M&Ms, feel-good music, and a healthy amount of procrastination. Succinct ideas, accurate punctuation, and a good thesaurus may also come in handy. Caitlin hones her writing skills by editing text messages because it is nearly impossible to fit everything she wants to say into one text. She looks forward to helping you as you take it to the MAX.

Dianna Amasino

A neuroscience major and economics minor, Dianna adores cooking, playing Bananagrams, watching monkey videos, and discussing papers, so bring your paper to the MAX Center.

Jane Bonsall

Jane first encountered stories and storytelling 20 odd years ago and has been in love with language ever since. An English major and a history minor, she is trying to learn a little bit more about the story of the world every day and to find new, beautiful ways to write about it.

Juliet Jacobs

Juliet, a double geography and English major from Westchester, NY., enjoys reading, hiking, and making up slang that she hopes will someday catch on. But even more, she enjoys helping people with their papers, so come visit her if you want to de-stress, problem solve, or just talk. For serial.

Luke Allen

Luke grew up in Iowa City and is proud of it! He plays viola in the Mac orchestra and has been trying (not very successfully) to learn the guitar. He is currently planning on majoring in Political Science and International Studies.

Revise, Revise, Revise! How to Get a Handle on the Big Picture

Revising is a necessary but often ignored step in the writing process. As a writer, you should develop your own system for revising and include the process every time you write something that will be evaluated by another. You may use these tips as a new system for revising or incorporate it into a system you have already developed.

Look at the big picture:

- Examine your thesis sentence, introduction, topic sentences, and conclusion. Ask yourself:
 1. What is my thesis sentence?
 2. Does my introduction include my thesis sentence?
 3. Are my topic sentences related to one another?
 4. Does my conclusion sum up what I've written? Does it restate my thesis?
- Once you've answered these questions in the affirmative, your paper should have a coherent structure.

Look at the blocks that build the picture:

- Evaluate your paragraphing. Ask yourself:
 1. What is the topic sentence of each paragraph?
 2. What does each paragraph say about its topic?
 3. Are the materials in each paragraph arranged effectively? Does each paragraph make a point, use appropriate evidence, and relate directly to the thesis of the paper?

(Tutor Profiles continued from p. 11)

Sarah Mintz

Sarah is a senior English major with a concentration in Human Rights and Humanitarianism. When not tutoring, Sarah enjoys going to concerts, cooking, and spending all her earnings at Tea Garden. Her favorite punctuation mark is the semicolon.

Wren Brennan

Wren, a junior from Seattle, enjoys Ultimate Frisbee, strong coffee, and a good book on a rainy day. An Anthropology major with a concentration in Human Rights and Humanitarianism, she really likes people, especially people who want to work on their writing.

Academic Integrity

Macalester College expects academic honesty from all students and faculty. Academic honesty encompasses accurate portrayal of contributions and appropriate use of resources. The Student Handbook lists on pp. 21-22 the procedures for dealing with possible violations of academic integrity:

<http://www.macalester.edu/studentaffairs/global/pdfs/20090831studenthandbook.pdf>

I'm writing a book. I've got the page numbers done.

~Steven Wright

Matea Wasend

Matea, a senior, enjoys both writing essays and reading other people's. Especially if they bring her chocolate to eat while doing so. (Sort of kidding.) An English major and Media Studies minor who knows her stuff, she learns something new every day at the MAX Center and hopes you will too.

Nora Kassner

Nora, a sophomore from Ann Arbor, Michigan, is a Classical Languages major with Linguistics and Geography minors. Proudly identifying as a geek, she loves to talk to people about the amazing work that goes on in Macalester classes.

Omar El Zoheiry

Omar, a junior from Egypt, is an Economics major but added International Studies and Political Science to the mix. A trilingual student who has studied in four different countries, Omar has diverse academic interests. You KNOW he will enjoy reading all of your papers!

Rachel Voit

Rachel is a sophomore majoring in Education Studies and Neuroscience. One of her specialties is helping you plan your paper well in advance so that you won't pull an all-nighter.

Rebecca Schultz

Rebecca is a junior English/Creative Writing major. She speaks Spanish and French in addition to English. As a lifeguard, she can save you from drowning, whether in the pool or in prose.

(Tutor Profiles continued on p. 22.)

How NOT To Stress About Writing

- Panic early, not the night before your paper is due.
- Talk to your professor about any unclear assignments.
- Ask your professor questions about details: What type of citations should I use? Should I write a formal essay? Who is my audience?
- Brainstorm, create a mind map, or free write to come up with preliminary ideas.
- Find a workspace that's free of distractions (the Internet, the television, significant others, and roommates).
- Make an outline before you start to write OR check your paper's organization by creating an outline from your first draft.
- Work on your paper a bit at a time. If you get frustrated, don't stop; move on to a different section.
- Write or revise your introduction last so it fits your topic.
- Talk to someone—a MAX Center tutor, a friend, or your professor—about your ideas.
- Ask a MAX Center tutor to help you at any stage in the writing process, from understanding the assignment to final editing.

Writing is a struggle against silence.

~ Carlos Fuentes

- Professors often value consistency and complete information more than strict adherence to a certain format. When in doubt, ask!
- The MAX Center has the most recent editions of several citation style manuals, and our tutors are here to help you figure it all out.
- For more complete descriptions of citation styles, try these websites:
<http://www.macalester.edu/library/research/general/citing.html>
<http://www.mla.org>
<http://www.apastyle.org>
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/index.html>

For further information, these reference books are available at the MAX Center or at the DeWitt Wallace Library:

- *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*, 2d ed. PN147.G444 1998.
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. Z253.U69 2003.
- *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th ed. BF76.7 .P83 2001.
- *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. with revisions, an introduction, and a chapter on writing by E.B. White, 3d ed. PE1408 .S772 1979.
- *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. Mac Ref Electronic book.
- *The Oxford Paperback Thesaurus*, 2d ed. Mac Ref Electronic book.

The following *exceptions* do not need to be credited:

- *Common knowledge*—a specific piece of information most readers would be likely to know
- *Facts available in a variety of sources*
- *Your own findings from field research, but be sure to indicate that the findings are, in fact, your own and not another researcher's*

Adapted from

Hjortshoj, Keith. *The Transition to College Writing*. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2001.

Resources

If you have any questions about whether or not you are using quotations, paraphrases, and summaries correctly, please come and check with us in the MAX Center. It helps if you bring your original sources with you, including bibliographic information for the sources.

An Academic Integrity Module, designed to help you improve your understanding of plagiarism is available at

<http://www.macalester.edu/library/instruction/academicintegrity/tutorial/index.html>

How Do I Cite This?

You've successfully incorporated your sources into your text; now cite them according to your required documentation style. Three common styles are MLA, APA, and Chicago Style, but many additional styles exist. Refer to the appropriate manuals for each style, and use RefWorks (check with the library) to help you keep track of that formatting. The MAX Center has style sheets for MLA, APA, Chicago Style, Turabian, and CSE.

The first goal of writing is to have one's words read successfully.

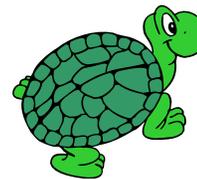
~ Robert Brault, www.robertbrault.com

But I AM stressed!

Sometimes you just have to stop writing (or NOT writing) and BREATHE. Try some of these techniques:

- Stand up, bend over slowly, drop your arms over your head, relax your spine, exhale completely, and shake your shoulders. Rise slowly, one vertebra at a time.
- Go for a five-minute walk.
- Take three deep breaths, holding each breath for a count of five before exhaling.
- Slow down! Slow your pace of eating, drinking, talking, or walking.
- Take a mental time-out. Imagine a momentary vacation.
- Give in. Learn to accept things you can't change. Allow yourself to feel whatever you feel and then move on.
- Break the procrastination habit by thinking about the NEXT single step in what you're trying to accomplish and then do it.
- Talk with a writing tutor. Sometimes just talking about what you want to write about can trigger a clear vision of what the paper should look like.
- If your paper is due in a few hours, it's still worth dropping in to talk to a writing tutor. We can help you focus on clarifying your most important points without worrying too much about how pretty the paper looks.
- The MAX Center is open Monday through Friday from 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. and Sunday through Thursday from 7:30 P.M. to 10 P.M. Tutoring is free and priceless.

A synonym is a word you use when you can't spell the other one.



~ Baltasar Gracián

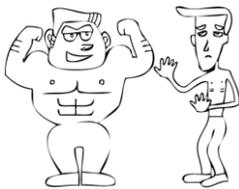
Strong Research Papers, Weak Research Papers

A Strong Paper:

- Has an introduction that engages the audience, tells readers why the study or topic is interesting, and introduces a clear thesis statement
- Contains original ideas and is organized logically
- Includes paragraphs that contain a focus and address it within an appropriate length
- Uses citations, quotes, and concrete examples as evidence to appropriately support the thesis throughout the paper.
- Fulfills the requirements of the assignment
- Is free of grammatical and mechanical errors

A Weak Paper:

- Uses jargon or inappropriate vocabulary
- Discusses topic using vague and/or intangible arguments
- Lacks a thesis or a clear and original argument.
- Contains superfluous information, relevant or not.
- Lacks continuity from one paragraph to the next.
- Includes research and quotations that fail to enhance the argument
- Contains grammatical and mechanical errors



How to Avoid ~~Getting Arrested for~~ Plagiarism

As scholars, we often use lots of other people's work to support our own ideas. Because the information is someone else's intellectual property, we must give credit to the original source in our own work by citing the references. Readers should never have any doubt as to whose ideas they are reading. Failing to acknowledge those sources constitutes *plagiarism*.

The safest way to avoid plagiarism is to acknowledge use of all of your sources:

1. When quoting a key phrase from an **original source** word-for-word, put quotation marks around it. And CITE IT!
2. When **paraphrasing** an original source, restate in your own words the ideas of the author. While you will use the paraphrase to support your own ideas and, in turn, write an evaluative response to the paraphrase, you must still indicate in your paper that the original idea is not yours but someone else's. And CITE IT!
3. When **summarizing** an original source, you're essentially paraphrasing general ideas; thus, the summary will be shorter than a paraphrase. When using summary in your paper, you must indicate that the idea is someone else's, not yours. CITE IT!

According to Keith Hjortshoj, the word *plagiarism* derives from the Latin for kidnapping; he argues that "the origin of the word conveys the seriousness of such offenses in the view of college teachers and administrators" (172).



I'd rather be caught holding up a bank than stealing so much as a two-word phrase from another writer.
~ Jack Smith

Problems with thesis/body unity can occur when the reader is not clear about how the body proves the thesis. It takes good judgment to select examples that prove an argument.

Substantiating your argument with these examples is tied to the nature of the assignment and how you have chosen to structure your paper; however, one tenet of thesis/body unity holds no matter what the length or discipline of your paper might be: *How your examples support your thesis is not self-evident to your reader, even if it might be to you.*

Just as the thesis is an extension of your voice, your body paragraphs and how they support the argument are extensions of your unique thought process. Use strong transitions to take your reader from one point to the next and to reinforce the points of the thesis.

Restating Your Argument in the Conclusion

The conclusion confirms the introduction and body of the paper and then eases back into the application and relevance of the thesis. Restate your thesis differently in the conclusion; it can be longer and more complex, it can include key words from the body of your paper, and it can be specifically applied to world at large, not just to your specific arguments. Now is time to answer "so what?" or raise new research questions. If the introduction points in towards the paper, the conclusion points out and forward.

Crafting your argument takes time, thought, research, and organization, but it's an investment that will pay off in the form of a solid, convincing piece of writing.

Adapted from

Brizee, Allen. "Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*. 17 April 2010. Web. 25 May 2010.

Crafting Your Argument

In many disciplines, a clear argument is the most important part of your paper. Making and substantiating a definitive claim about a particular issue or subject shows that you have familiarized yourself with relevant facts and existing discourse. Because every discipline has its own standards, your first step is to ask your professors what they look for in a thesis. You need not have an argument ready (or any research done) to ask this question, so ask early.

Researching Under the Influence (of an Argument)

When writing a research or analytical paper, many students face a dilemma: do I read all the texts first and then create a thesis, or do I select my resources based on an argument? The answer depends entirely upon the subject and the nature of the assignment. If you are writing a literary analysis of a novel, you would read the novel first and then craft your subject and argument based on what interests you. If you are writing a paper that takes a definitive side on a topic, however, you might first choose a side and then look for support and ways to counter the opposite side.

Many assignments fall in between. An effective way to deal with those assignments (short ethnographies, reviews of literature or theory, historical research papers, case studies) is to begin your research not with a *thesis* but with a *hypothesis* about your topic. It can be a controversial statement that you intend to prove or disprove or a research question that you aim to answer. If you feel most comfortable starting off with a broad statement or question (e.g. is torture bad, and why?) you can talk to professors, writing assistants, or a MAX Center tutor to narrow it down to fit the assignment (e.g. is torture bad for American national security, and why?).

In addition to setting up a clear, concise, and contestable thesis, having a specific research question or statement will make finding sources easier and will help reduce your reading load to the most relevant sources.

The Most Important Sentence You Will Ever Write: Your Thesis

You do not want to write one long, jam-packed thesis; instead, ask yourself these questions so that you can keep your thesis erudite, relevant, and snappy:

1. Is the sentence specific and substantive?

Avoid broad, non-contestable statements and focus on the *why* and *how*.

Broad statement: Light rail will affect downtown businesses.

Specific thesis: Downtown businesses will not suffer when the light rail is installed.

The second example is clear and concise and sets the stage for greater elaboration. In this case, the writer could take it a step farther and substantiate the claim within the sentence:

If downtown businesses plan ahead and use local resources, they will survive and maybe even thrive when the light rail is installed.

This version leaves little doubt in the reader's mind regarding your argument but leaves the proof for the body of the paper.

2. Can I memorize this statement?

If not, rephrase it until it is clear and concise. Remember, you have the whole rest of the paper to elaborate and prove the argument. Making your thesis short and memorable will make it easier for your reader to check

your argument against the claims in the body of the paper.

3. Am I trying to lay out both my argument and the structure of my paper in the same sentence?

If yes, consider breaking it up into a sentence devoted to briefly substantiating your argument and a separate "road map" sentence that addresses what you will say when. It's perfectly okay to fall back on a concise thesis followed by a more specific road map in your first draft. If your professors would prefer another structure in your introduction, they will generally say so.

Your thesis is your moment to enter your voice, your research, and your thought process into an existing debate. Everything you have to say after that will be judged on whether or not it supports your argument. At the end of your writing process, make sure your thesis is saying what you want it to.

Two Arguments are NOT Better than One: the Hidden Argument and Thesis/Body Unity

Now that you've polished the rough concepts of your argument into a clear, shimmering thesis, you should take care to make sure that this thesis a) matches the examples you have chosen, and b) is reflected in and substantiated by the body of your paper. It is easy to have a "hidden argument," a point that is omitted from or different from the thesis itself.

Sometimes this hidden argument is an unaddressed theoretical underpinning, but more often, it is an unplanned conclusion the writer draws through the process of actually writing the paper. Constantly checking your thesis statement to make sure your thesis reflects your proof will help you find and address a hidden argument.