

## Module 1.2 Creating a Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is one to two sentences that explain what your paper will focus on, or your perspective on the topic. A good thesis statement shows that you have learned enough about the topic to support your opinion. You have likely gained this topic knowledge from the course lectures, talking to your instructor, and searching for and reading additional scholarly materials, like encyclopedias, handbooks, and articles. The thesis statement also keeps you organized as you research and write, helping you decide what scholarly materials add to your argument, and what ones aren't relevant.

A good thesis statement is written with clear language. It is specific, and expresses one main idea, which you will explain and support throughout your essay. The statement may be clear to you at the start of researching the paper, or it may become clear as you read articles to prepare to write. And not all papers require thesis statements; if you aren't sure, ask your instructor.

There are several questions that you can ask about a topic that will help you draft a thesis statement. For example:

- Cause: What caused the changes in Canadian legal definitions of family?
- Effect: How has the changing definition of marriage impacted applications to immigrate to Canada?
- Compare and contrast: What are the similarities between American and Canadian definitions of marriage?
- Evaluate: Is openness to changing definitions of marriage also reflected in Canadians' openness to changing definitions of family?