

***Developing a Thesis Statement for the Textual Analysis Essay***

As the Analyzing Written Texts Mini-Lecture mentioned, you will need to be sure your thesis statement for this paper meets the following criteria.

1. It must make an arguable claim.
2. It must make a judgment about the effectiveness or appropriateness of the author's techniques as related to his argument, audience, and/or purpose.
3. It must mention the rhetorical elements you plan to analyze in your essay.

These sample thesis statements exemplify the types of thesis that could work well in a textual analysis essay. (Note: I've underlined the judgment and **bolded the rhetorical elements** in each example.)

- A. "On the Uses of Liberal Education":

Although Mark Edmunson's **ethos** may hurt his argument, his use of **pathos** and **logos** ultimately makes his argument effective.

- B. "The Smurfette Principle":

Katha Pollitt relies heavily on **emotional appeals** to convince her audience that children's programming enforces sexism; however, her argument lacks the **logical support** needed to persuade an academic audience.

- C. "Why Games Are Good for You":

Through his use of a **conversational tone**, **well-explained concessions**, and a balance of both **academic research and real-world examples**, Steven Johnson effectively uses **ethos** and **logos** to present a strong argument.

- D. "Letter from Birmingham Jail":

Martin Luther King Junior's skillful incorporation of **biblical allusion**, **historical references**, and **personal narrative** all work together to build his **ethos** to prove himself a credible and noteworthy voice in the Christian community to which he writes, thereby substantiating his argument.

As you review these sample thesis statements, notice that they become increasingly specific. If you wish, you may treat ethos, pathos, and logos generally (as seen in example A), or you might decide that you can't cover that much ground in a single essay and decide to focus only on the way an author develops one or two of rhetorical appeals (as seen in examples C and D). Also, notice that you may wish to focus on both effective and ineffective rhetorical methods and their impact on the essay's argument (as seen in examples A and B).

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