

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

- A. "Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?":

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

- B. "What Mindfulness Revolution?":

Ronald Purser relies heavily on logical appeals to convince his audience that do-it-yourself spirituality does not contribute toward a just society; however, his argument lacks the emotional appeal needed to cause desired changes in his audience.

- C. "How Big-Time Sports Ate College Life":

Through her use of a **conversational tone**, **well-explained concessions**, and a balance of both **academic research and real-world examples**, Laura Pappano effectively uses pathos 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Martin Luther King Junior's skillful incorporation of biblical allusion, historical references, and personal narrative all work together to build his ethos to prove himself a credible and noteworthy voice in the Christian community to which he writes,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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