A thesis acts as a roadmap to your report or memo. A thesis should:

- make one strong, specific claim
- tell the reader what to expect in the rest of the document
- come at the end of the opening paragraph in your executive summary or introduction.

Consider the following assignment and thesis statements:

**Assignment:** Discuss the potential implications of the SEC’s new 21st Century Disclosure Initiative. You should discuss the potential implications of the initiative for investors and for public companies.

**Ineffective thesis statement:**

"There are some positive and negative implications of the new initiative in question."

**Problems:**

- too vague - what are the implications? what is the initiative?
- too descriptive - what is your position/argument/opinion about the topic?

**Effective thesis statement:**

“The most far-reaching potential implication of the SEC’s 21st Century Disclosure Initiative is the presentation of relevant disclosure information in a uniform format, which will facilitate more informed decision-making for both investors and public companies.”

**Improvements:**

- specifies the initiative
- asserts a strong claim: “will facilitate more informed decision-making”
- states the specific implications for investors and public companies.
Ineffective thesis statement:
“The SEC’s 21st Century Disclosure Initiative has important implications for investors, while the SEC’s Plain English Initiative more directly impacts public companies.”

Problem:
- not specific - audience does not know which initiative will be discussed, and the impact listed is vague

Effective thesis statement:
“Because relevant disclosure information is crucial to making sound investment decisions, the SEC’s 21st Century Disclosure Initiative is more likely to have a significant impact on investors than on public companies.”

Improvements:
- provides evidence to support the claim
- specifies the initiative
- indicates the specific impact on investors

TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE THESIS
- articulate one specific claim about your topic
- include relevant and necessary detail for your audience
- ensure thesis guides evidence and analysis to come