**Checklist for Revising Thesis Statements – Full information @** [**https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#defensible**](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#defensible)

1. [Is your thesis statement a single declarative sentence?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#single) DIH 1.4.1.1  
   If everything you say in an essay supports a single point or claim, then you can express that claim in a single sentence. Notice that nobody is saying that it must be a short sentence or a pretty sentence. But it must be one sentence, not two or more sentences.
2. [Does your thesis statement state what you want your readers to know, believe, or understand after reading your essay?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#after)  DIH 1.4.1.4  
   A thesis statement is not necessarily part of the introduction, and in developing your thesis statement you should not be thinking primarily about how you want your essay to start. You should be thinking about what you want the whole essay to say, what you want the reader to know or believe at the end of the essay, not the beginning.
3. [Does your thesis statement reflect everything in the essay? Does your essay develop everything in the thesis statement?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#see)  DIH 1.4.2.3  
   Your thesis statement is to your essay as the scale model is to the building. Until construction is complete, you can always make changes. So if there are major ideas in the essay that belong there but aren't reflected in your thesis, you need to revise the thesis so that it reflects everything you want to say.
4. [Can you ask and answer the questions "why?" and "how?" of your trial thesis statement?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#ask)  DIH 1.4.3.1  
   Look at your trial thesis statement and see if it makes sense to ask either "why?" or "how?" of your thesis statement as you have written it. If it does, then answer the question and write the answer down. The answer to that question will often be a better thesis statement than your original.  A finished thesis for a finished essay will usually make those answers clear.
5. [Is your thesis statement a positive statement, not a negative one?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#make)  DIH 1.4.3.2  
   The problem with making your thesis statement a negative claim is that the only way to support it is by making a positive claim. So if your thesis statement is worded negatively, you probably haven't said what you need to say yet. Notice that if you ask the question "why?" of a negative claim, you will almost always have to answer it with a positive one.
6. [Do you use the active voice in every clause in your thesis statement?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#use)  DIH 1.4.3.3  
   We want a thesis statement to express action, not just join topics together. We want a thesis statement to express what we are going to say, not just what we are going to write about. If we try to put every clause in every thesis statement in the active voice it will help us to find out what we really want to say and to write better essays faster.  So your thesis should never use "is" or "are" or any other linking verb as a main verb.  Tell us what somebody did or does.
7. [Is your thesis statement clear and unambiguous?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#clear)  DIH 1.4.4.1  
   Make sure it couldn't be interpreted to mean something other than what you want it to mean. It should be unambiguous. Ask whether the sentence could mean different things to different people. If it could, revise it to remove the possible meanings that you don't want to convey.
8. [Is your thesis statement precise and limited?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#precise)  DIH 1.4.4.2  
   State no more than you are willing to defend. Probably the most common problem with trial thesis statements is that they are too broad, that they claim too much.  In a good essay, you will say more about less, not less about more.  That is, you will develop your essay through specifics, examples, evidence of some detail that you can directly relate to your own experience or to specific sources.
9. [Is your thesis statement controversial or informative?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#controversial)  DIH 1.4.4.3  
   Your thesis statement should be a statement about which your audience's knowledge or thinking is deficient or erroneous. You should be telling them something they don't already know or don't already believe.  The point you make in your essay shouldn't be obvious.  If most of your readers are likely to believe your thesis without even reading your essay, you probably don't need to write an essay to support that thesis.
10. [Is your thesis statement defensible?](https://www2.palomar.edu/users/jtagg/handbook/thesis.htm#defensible)  DIH 1.4.4.3  
    Can you move your audience to accept this thesis statement in an essay of the length you propose to write? Just as you can't write a very good essay pointing out something that is already obvious to your readers, you shouldn't make a claim that is so controversial that you really don't have a chance of getting your readers to accept it.