

THE THESIS

The research paper is more than a presentation of factual material; it should prove a particular point. **Formulating a thesis statement is one of the most important steps in writing a good research paper.** The thesis statement should appear in the first paragraph of the paper, but does not have to be the first sentence, and every following paragraph should be directly related to the thesis. The thesis statement will prepare the reader for the remainder of the paper. The thesis should be as specific as possible, but not so limiting that it creates research roadblocks.

This is an example of a good thesis statement:

The old Cuban fisherman, Santiago, is a Christ Figure in Ernest Hemingway's novella *The Old Man and the Sea*.

This is an example of a weak thesis:

The Old Man and the Sea can be interpreted in many ways.

Question: What differences are there between the two? List and explain the differences below.