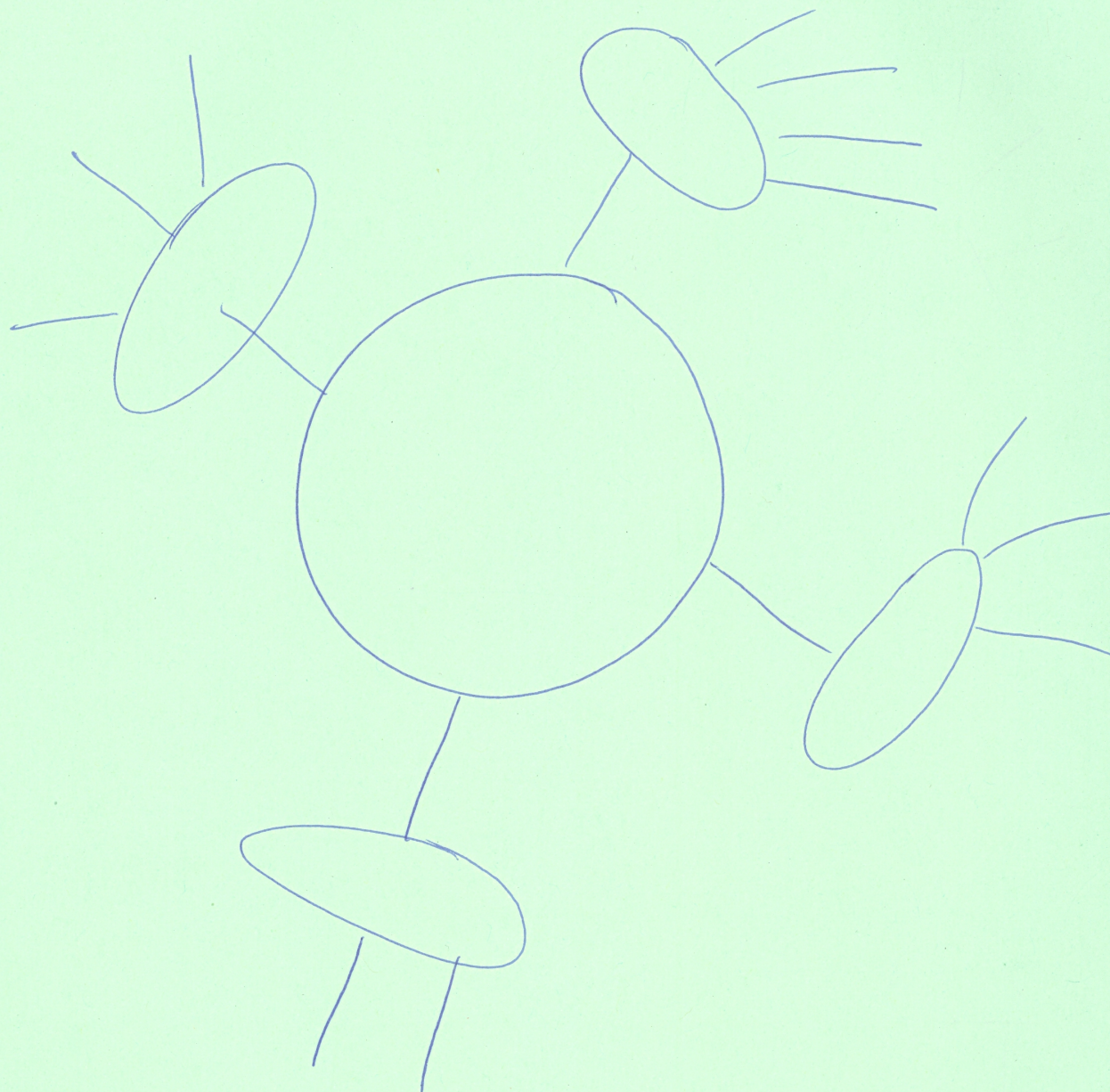


Mindmap



Outline

TITLE _____

QUESTION/PROBLEM _____

THESIS STATE. _____

(A) _____

(B) _____

(C) _____

(D) _____

Essay title

Writing a Thesis Sentence

Essay title

- The first thing the reader will notice in any essay is the title.
- It is the key that presents and organizes everything that follows.
- Choosing adequate essay title is vital if you want to make a good first impression on the reader.
- The title must provide the main idea of what the reader is about to read. But it also has to produce in the reader the need to know more.
- A good essay title should give the reader the main idea of what the paper is about.
- But most of the times it is not enough to just write the subject of the essay. How many essays are there written about Shakespeare, global warming or democracy? Then, you can't just use "Characters of William Shakespeare" as a title.
- At the same time, do not try to reveal too much in a title. "An analysis of the main characters in William Shakespeare's plays according to the sociopolitical context of Queen Elizabeth's reign" sounds too long.
- Try something like "Shakespeare's characters: men of their time". That way, you can extend your main idea in the essay's introduction.

Writing a Thesis Sentence

The thesis sentence is typically that ONE sentence in the paper that asserts, controls, and **structures** the entire argument. Without a strong persuasive, thoughtful thesis, a paper might seem unfocused and weak.

Complicating the matter further is that different disciplines (and topics) have different notions of what constitutes a good thesis sentence. Your English professor might frown on a thesis sentence that says, "This paper will argue X by asserting A, B, and C." Such a thesis would likely be seen as too

formulaic. In a Social Science course, on the other hand, a good thesis might be crafted in just that way.

So what makes a good thesis sentence?

A good thesis will generally have the following characteristics:

I. A good thesis sentence will make a claim.

This doesn't mean that you have to reduce an idea to an "either/or" proposition and then take a stand. Rather, you need to develop an interesting perspective that you can support and defend.

This perspective must be more than an observation. "America is violent" is an observation. "Americans are violent because they are fearful" (the position that Michael Moore takes in *Bowling for Columbine*) is an argument. Why? Because it posits a perspective. It makes a claim.

Put another way, a good thesis sentence will inspire (rather than quiet) other points of view. One might argue that America is violent because of its violent entertainment industry. Or because of the proliferation of guns. Or because of the disintegration of the family.

II. A good thesis sentences will control the entire argument.

Your thesis sentence determines what you are required to say in a paper. It also determines what you cannot say. **Every paragraph in your paper exists in order to support your thesis.** Accordingly, if one of your paragraphs seems irrelevant to your thesis you have two choices: get rid of the paragraph, or rewrite your thesis.

Understand that you don't have a third option: you can't simply stick the idea in without preparing the reader for it in your thesis. The thesis is like a contract between you and your reader. If you introduce ideas that the reader isn't prepared for, you've violated that contract.

III. A good thesis will provide a structure for your argument.

A good thesis not only signals to the reader *what* your argument is, but *how* your argument will be presented. In other words, your thesis sentence should either directly or indirectly suggest the structure of your argument to your reader.