

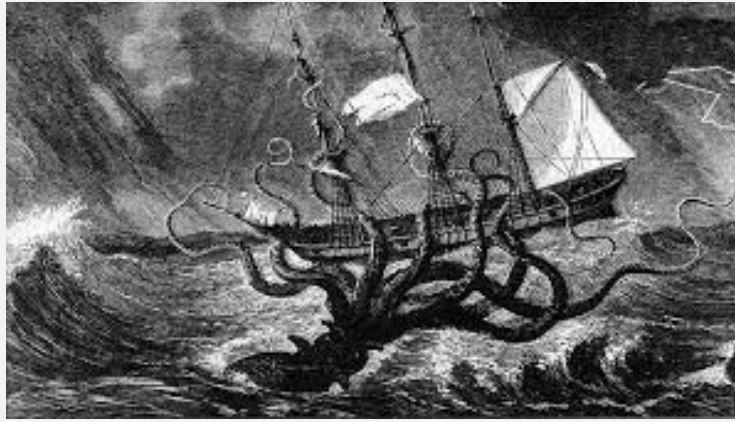
# Thesis Statements

UCLA History Writing Center  
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Ceren Abi  
cerenabi@ucla.edu

Elusive  
Mythical  
Creatures?



## Are they mythical?



## Common Mistakes

- o Restating the topic/subject
- o Mismatch between thesis statement and the rest of the paper
- o Regurgitating someone else's point of view. (Prof. Brown argues that French Revolution provided great opportunities for cats.)
- o Stating the obvious facts (Madonna and Michael Jackson are similar yet different.)
- o Claiming things that you cannot prove. (I believe that yeti lived in California)
- o Claims that does not answer the "so what" question. (Cleopatra killed herself.)

## Let's talk about your writing process

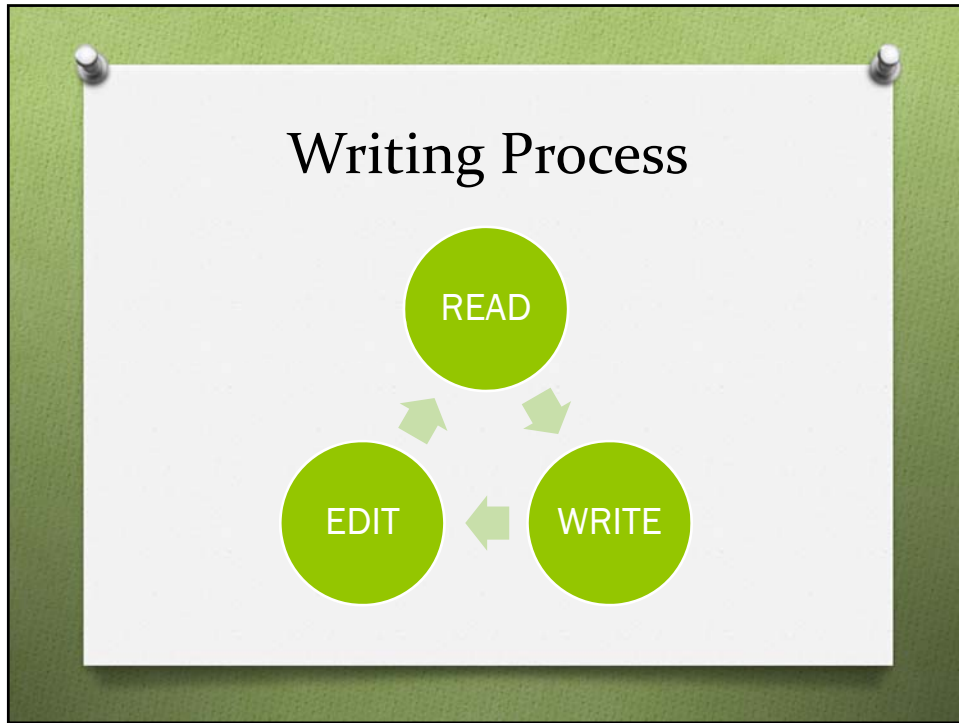
<b>1 Prewrite</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decide why you are writing and who will read it.</li> <li>Choose a topic.</li> <li>Gather ideas.</li> <li>Organize your ideas.</li> </ul>	<b>4 Edit</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check your spelling.</li> <li>Fix punctuation mistakes.</li> <li>Fix capitalization mistakes.</li> <li>Fix other grammar mistakes.</li> </ul>
<b>2 Draft</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use your notes from prewriting.</li> <li>Get your ideas down on paper.</li> <li>Don't worry about mistakes.</li> </ul>	<b>5 Publish</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a format.</li> <li>Neatly print or type a final draft.</li> <li>Add visuals.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Revise</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add details and ideas.</li> <li>Delete ideas that are off topic.</li> <li>Substitute more interesting words.</li> <li>Rearrange sentences or parts of sentences.</li> </ul>	<b>6 Present</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share with your audience.</li> </ul>

## Most Popular Writing Process

**STAGES OF WRITING: DON'T TRY THIS ON CAMPUS**

<p><b>DENIAL</b></p>	<p><b>BARGAINING</b></p>	<p><b>PANICKING</b></p>	<p><b>REGRET</b></p>
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Nick M. Sambaluk — University Daily Kansan



### 1) What are you writing?

- o Read the prompt and or instructions carefully.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>

## Example

- o Pick a source we discussed in lectures and write a 5-page paper about the core values of the society which created this source. What is the historical context in which this source was created?

## What are you writing II

- o Determine what kind of paper you are writing:
  - o A response paper?
  - o A term paper?
  - o An honors thesis?



2) Do you have the sources you need?



Do you have sources you need to answer your question?

Back your argument up by providing evidence!

## CONSTRUCTING YOUR THESIS STATEMENT

- o WHAT IS IT? The thesis explains your central argument, elaborating on “WHY” your claim is significant or “HOW” your claim is supported.
- o WHERE? The thesis should be one or two sentences in your introductory paragraph.

## Characteristics of thesis Statements

- o Be specific.
- o MUST ANSWER:
  - What is my claim?
  - How is my claim supported? (can be implicit)
  - So what – why does my claim matter?

### 3) START WITH A QUESTION (a given one or not)

- o Start with a significant, complex, and original question.
- o Your thesis statement may challenge accepted wisdom or complicate a seemingly clear-cut topic.
- o Make sure that you have evidence to back your thesis statement

### CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

- o Start with a topic. Can be very general.

Example: Mexicans of California and Anglo-American expansion to the West



## CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

- Develop a question around it. This will also help you narrow your topic.

Example: What was the relationship between Mexicans of California and the newcomer Anglo-Americans after the inclusion of California to United States?

## CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

- Develop a unique perspective on your question that answers it.
- Example: Despite differences in language and perceived differences of race by the Anglo-Americans, the early relationship between Mexican elite and the newcomers was warm due to shared economic aspirations.

## APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

- o **Approach #1** – Challenge a given position. For example first introduce the counterargument and continue with your own argument. You can use “although” or “however” to link your sentences.

## APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTING A THESIS

- o **Approach #2** – Try to convince your reader via answering what, how and so what questions.

## Let's practice



## Changes

- o "The changes that occurred in the wake of World War I were manifested in many aspects of American life."

## What changes?

- o “The changes that occurred in the wake of World War I were manifested in many aspects of American life, from questioning old beliefs to roles in society, causing an open split between old and new.”

## How and so what?

- o “In the Wake of World War I, tension over changing social ideologies and roles were manifested in political demonstrations that reflected the growing sense of fear and uncertainty about society’s new direction that would continue on well into the 20th century.”

## Strong or Weak?

- There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.
- <http://www.unm.edu/~caps/caps-handouts/writing-center/thes2.html>

## Strong or Weak?

- Because Banana Herb Tea Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.



## Strong or Weak?

- o World hunger has many causes and effects.

## Strong or Weak?

- o Hunger persists in Glandelinia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.

## Question

- o This summer there was considerable discussion in the news and social media about Rachel Dolezal, who resigned as chair of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) after her parents revealed that she was not African American, as she had claimed to be. What can this story tell us about the social construction of race in 20<sup>th</sup> century United States?

## An example of an intro paragraph\*

- o **When** Rachel Dolezal's parents revealed that their daughter, who identified and presented herself as black, was actually born and raised white, the conversation surrounding the existence and validity of transracial identity **was suddenly ignited in mainstream America. Some support** Dolezal's choice to disregard social conventions to form her own racial identity and have compared her situation to the plight of transgressors. **Others are critical** and view Dolezal's actions as being offensive and insulting. Dolezal's situation and others like **it force us to reflect** on our current attitudes about race and realize how much of our current understanding of race is socially constructed and is subject to change. **However,** while Dolezal's self-identification as a black woman does shatter our preconceived notions of race and self-identity, **it is also important to note** how Dolezal also reinforces the traditional conventions surrounding race, and that her willingness to disregard her "biological" race **is actually not** doing away with the importance or presence of race; **rather, it is** only repackaging and redefining race. Race **shifts from** being primarily a societal concern **to becoming** more of an individual issue, **but** race as a concept is not being erased.

## Rest of the paper

- Should work to support your main thesis.
- Prove that your thesis statement is correct (via proper evidence)
- Your conclusion should include a paraphrased version of your thesis statement.

## Risky words

- Personal pronouns: I, You etc.
- Uncertainty qualifiers: Perhaps, maybe
- Sweeping generalizations: From the beginning of time...
- Vague formulations: Some, kind of, etc.

## 4) Editing

- o Your topic may change as you write, so you may need to revise your thesis statement to reflect exactly what you have discussed in the paper.
- o Remember that writing is a process, it takes time and effort to write a good paper.

## Writing Process





Thank you!