

## FOUR STEPS TO A GOOD THESIS STATEMENT

### ***STEP 1 - Brainstorm the topic.***

Let's say that your question is "What are three main causes of WWI?" You find that you can recall  
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You start out with a thesis statement like this:

**Militarism, Alliances, Imperialism, Nationalism, Archduke Ferdinand.**

This fragment isn't a thesis statement. Instead, it simply indicates general subjects. Furthermore, your reader doesn't know what you want to say about any of these subjects.

### ***STEP 2 - Narrow the topic.***

Your considering your topics, you think you can write the most on Militarism, Nationalism, and Imperialism, but not Alliances and Ferdinand. You also recall that all the countries wanted to keep the balances of power, so that's what led to these three causes.

You change your thesis to look like this:

**Maintain a balance of power, causing militarism, nationalism, and imperialism.**

This fragment not only announces your subject, but it focuses your argument. You should note that this fragment is not a thesis statement because your reader doesn't know your conclusions on the topic.

### ***STEP 3 - Take a position on the topic.***

After reflecting on the topic a little while longer, you decide that what you really want to say about this topic is that the foreign policies of countries in Europe focused on what would eventually cause the war.

You revise your thesis statement to look like this:

**Prior to WWI, countries in Europe sought to maintain a balance of power, which caused their foreign policies to be militaristic, nationalistic, and imperialistic.**

This statement asserts your position, but the term *foreign policy* is vague.

**STEP 4 - Use specific language.**

You decide to explain what you mean about *foreign policy*, so you write:

**Prior to WWI, countries in Europe sought to maintain a balance of power, which caused disputes and competition in their foreign policies so much that militarism, nationalism, and imperialism led to war.**

This thesis is ideal, but don't dwell on the thesis excessively. If it's not coming to you on how to develop a more specific thesis, leave it vague. Technically, the analytical quality of your essay is getting you marks, not the thesis. However, the thesis is an argument you are trying to make that's supported by analysis in the essay, which is backed up by historical facts.