Writing the Thesis Statement

Tips for Writing a Thesis Statement:

- Brainstorm the topic.
- Narrow the topic
- Take a position on the topic.
- Use specific language.
- Make an assertion based on clearly stated support.
- Distill the topic into a series of specific questions.
- Strive for clarity and strength.
- Complicate, challenge, and/or enhance existing literature related to your topic.
- Once you have your argument, massage, revise, and play with style until you have said what it is you wish to say in an interesting and elegant manner.

1. Read What You’ve Written to date—3 minutes

Read through, and highlight, the writing that we’ve done over the past couple of days. See what you’ve had to say about topics over the last few days. **Choose specific words and phrases.**

2. Narrow the topic—3 minutes

Now that you have a good mess of words in front of you, look for patterns, repetitions, or other items of interest. Circle or highlight these words and phrases in what you’ve written in the first week.

3. Take an initial and broad position on the topic—5 minutes

How do you feel and think about what you’ve written? Are you in favor of it? Are you not? Write your broad position down.

4. Use Specific language—5 minutes

Are your thoughts clearly expressed by the words you have chosen? Quickly consult your “mental thesaurus” here. Could any of your words be substituted for more focused or interesting words? Write them down.

5. Distill the topic into a series of specific questions—5 minutes

What is piquing your interest? What is not? What questions do you have about the topic and the scholarship and literature surrounding it? Write these questions down. **They will be useful in your next step.**
7. *Write your thesis—5 minutes.* Massage, revise, and play with your style until you have expressed your thesis in an interesting and elegant manner. Experiment with vocabulary, sentence structure, voice, tone, and rhythm. **Use the questions above to help you nail down your thesis.**