

## DEVELOPING A THESIS

After doing your research and becoming knowledgeable about your topic, it's time to define your thesis. A thesis is a statement that presents your argument or interpretation of your topic to your audience. A thesis should define your topic, express an opinion, and evaluate your topic.

**Define your topic**—Your thesis needs to say what exactly your paper, exhibit, etc. is about. For example, if your topic is about Henry Ford and his creation of the Model T, then your thesis statement needs to mention “Henry Ford” and “Model T.”

**Express an opinion**—Your thesis should make a claim about your topic. Think of the body of your work as providing the evidence to argue your claim.

**Evaluate your topic**—Your thesis needs to answer your audience's question of “So what?” How did this effect other events, people, and things? Did it lead to something else? Did it change how people thought about something?

### Let's look at an example:

**Weak Thesis:** Henry Ford produced the first Model T in 1908.

**Stronger Thesis:** Henry Ford changed the way Americans lived in the twentieth century with the production of affordable and reliable vehicles such as the Model T in 1908.

The first thesis is weak because it defines the topic, but it doesn't express any sort of opinion or evaluate the topic. However, the second topic manages to also express an opinion—Henry Ford changed American life— and evaluate—he changed life through making cars affordable and reliable.

