**Your Personal Essay Thesis Sentence**

**What's the Big Idea?**

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*The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.*  
Aristotle

Why do famous quotes become famous? What is special about them? If you think about it, famous quotes are succinct statements that make a bold claim. A thesis statement should do the same thing. It should state a big idea in just a few words.

Consider this quote:

*He who opens a school door, closes a prison.*--Victor Hugo

This statement manages to encapsulate an enormous argument in one terse comment, and that is your goal when writing a thesis statement. If Victor Hugo had wanted to use simpler words, he could have said:

1. Education is important for personal growth and awareness.
2. Social awareness develops from education.
3. Education can reform.

Notice that each of these statements, like the quote, makes a claim that can be backed up with evidence?

Here's another quote:  
*Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.*  
--Winston Churchill

Once again, the statement sets up an argument in interesting but terse language. Churchill might have said:

1. Everybody fails, but successful people fail many times.
2. You can learn from failure if you don't give up.

When creating a thesis, you don't have to use colorful words like the ones that appear in famous quotes. But you should try to sum up a big idea or make a big claim in one sentence.

Just for fun, look over the following quotes and come up with your own versions that could work as a thesis statement. By studying these quotes and practicing in this way, you can develop your own ability to sum up your thesis in a brief but engaging sentence.

*Attempt the impossible in order to improve your work.*  
Bette Davis

*Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success.*  
Henry Ford

*In order to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe.*  
Carl Sagan

*If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.*  
Bill Cosby