

Your Personal Essay Thesis Sentence

What's the Big Idea?

By [Grace Fleming](#), About.com Guide

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