

THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
- THESIS STATEMENT/INTRODUCTION -

Most papers do not have a complete thesis statement. Your introduction must do more than simply outline the "focus" of your analysis. A complete thesis statement must also make it clear to the reader exactly what the rest of the paper will examine.

Specifically, it should outline the main thesis, your conclusion, and the various issues you are going to touch on in the following pages to support your main argument. As The Political Science Student Writer's Manual suggests, a complete thesis statement should serve a number of different functions:

- 1) It should limit the material you are going to cover and make the focus of the paper more manageable. This is usually done by narrowing your field of study.
- 2) It must establish the "purpose" of the project and give some "reason" why you decided to write about this particular topic (i.e. why is this subject important).
- 3) Finally, it must provide the reader with a "map" that outlines what will follow in the subsequent pages. It should also make some attempt to acknowledge the audience it is trying to reach by pointing out various issue-areas that might be of interest (i.e. if you are writing a political science paper don't talk about volcanoes in B.C.)

One way to know you have a complete thesis statement is to pose two or three questions (dealing with the focus of your analysis), answer them, and provide the reader with a brief outline of the remainder of your paper. In an introductory or second year course all of this information should be covered in the first paragraph (your introduction).

If you are still unclear on how to write a complete thesis statement try using the following guidelines to "construct" your introduction in various stages. The following is an introduction/thesis statement taken from a work entitled. The Formulation of Canadian Foreign Economic Policy: The Provinces and the North American Free Trade Agreement. This is from a book length manuscript so your thesis statement/introduction should be shorter and more concise.

Step One - The Introductory Sentence(s) - Narrowing Your Field of Study

"Throughout the post-war period economic regimes have limited state autonomy by restricting the independent policy choices of most governments in the international system. In the Canadian case, this is clearly evident when examining the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on the formulation of foreign economic policy. Specifically, this study will focus on the international and domestic pressures, namely economic regimes and federal-provincial relations, that currently constrain the foreign economic policy choices of the federal government."

Step Two - The "Purpose" of Your Paper - Posing Questions

"At the same time, however, the following chapters will also address a number of theoretical questions regarding the literature on Canadian foreign policy, Canadian federalism, and international relations theory. To date, most studies have focused on the institutions and "territorial" conceptions of identity associated with regimes and federal-provincial relations. These are valid observations. By limiting discussion to those issues,

however, one misses other important, and perhaps more interesting questions that should be asked. Specifically, what long-term impact will globalization have on federal and provincial autonomy and how is it possible to reconcile the differences between domestic and international levels of analysis?"

Step Three - The Conclusion

"By introducing the concept of intrusive interdependence this study will suggest that as globalization continues to evolve autonomy is challenged by both international and domestic factors for both federal and provincial governments. At the international level, states cede sovereignty to international regimes in an attempt to manage these transnational forces. In federal states like Canada, this initially empowers the provinces and reinforces traditional regional cleavages within Canadian federalism. Over time, however, provincial autonomy is also eroded as issues of sub-national jurisdiction are added to the international agenda and domestic non-territorial cleavages mobilize to protect their interests."

Step Four - The "Table of Contents"

* Note - This was a separate paragraph due to the length of the work.

Your paper should have all four sections in one introductory paragraph.

"The following chapters are divided into three main sections. The first outlines the increasing intrusiveness of international globalization, the forces promoting decentralization of Canadian federalism before the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the theoretical implications associated with these developments. In addition, it also acknowledges the fact that provincial activity in the international system has increased substantially during the latter stages of the post-war period for economic and, in the case of Quebec, nationalist reasons. Although these changes were reinforced by the NAFTA it is important to understand that international and domestic pressures existed prior to the agreement and that these factors provided new opportunities for the provinces while limiting the capacity of the federal government to formulate independent economic policy. The second section of this study focuses exclusively on the North American Free Trade Agreement. Specifically, it examines the intrusiveness of the regime and the areas of domestic jurisdiction that were included in the agreement. It also outlines the emerging NAFTA committee system and the potential constitutional significance of formalizing these executive linkages. In addition, the importance of the NAFTA side deals on labour and environment are discussed in the sense that both include exclusive areas of provincial jurisdiction which has forced the federal government to enter into negotiations with the provinces over a binding enforcement mechanism. Finally, the last section of the study examines the extent to which either level of government in Canada has acknowledged and responded to the implications related to these developments and the potential long-term impact of intrusive interdependence. Based on interviews with both federal and provincial officials it is clear that this is not the case. For the most part government representatives remain concerned with the daily "wins" and "losses" of Canadian federalism. As such, they continue to formulate Canadian foreign economic policy primarily on an ad hoc basis."