

Thesis Statements

for a Critical Paper (English 103)

A thesis statement cannot merely be a statement of fact:

Oliver Stone's *Platoon* depicts the Vietnam War.

A thesis cannot be a question:

Does Oliver Stone's *Platoon* portray the Vietnam War accurately?

A thesis cannot be an incomplete sentence:

How *Platoon* shows the Americans in Vietnam.

A thesis statement should avoid the use of "I":

In this essay I am going to explain how *Platoon* depicts the discord among American soldiers as a microcosm of American society.



A thesis statement should focus on the film, not on the viewer:

Platoon shows the viewers the experiences of soldiers in Vietnam.

Ideally, a thesis statement for a critical essay should have an evaluative (critical) component:

In his film *Platoon*, Oliver Stone **effectively** uses the soldier characters to epitomize the consequences of internal conflict.

Your thesis is your "stand" on the subject. It should avoid the pitfalls above, be a sentence (or two) in length, and should state clearly and specifically your intentions as an opinion that can be supported.