

Limiting A Subject

First, the writer must consider the assignment: its aim or purpose and its audience.

In selecting a topic for a paper, the writer should try to view it in terms of such limiting factors as the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1. a specific kind | not art in general, but pop art |
| 2. a specific time | not art in all periods, but in the last decade of twentieth-century art |
| 3. a specific place | not universal art, but art in the United States |
| 4. a specific number | not all pop artists, but representative pop artists |
| 5. a specific person | Andy Warhol, a well-known pop art pioneer |
| 6. a specific type | not all kinds of pop art, but serigraphs (silk screen prints) |
| 7. a specific aspect | not art as a whole, but art as communication |
| 8. a specific example | not pop art, but Andy Warhol's "Marilyn Monroe" |
| 9. a specific experience | the first time you saw "Tomato Soup" at the Museum of Modern Art |

Another example:

limited to one type of habitat

limited to one country

limited to one region

limited to one state

limited to one time

limited to one aspect

Nature

the desert

the United States

the Southwest

Utah

when the moon rises

complexity of desert wildlife

Often circumstances will force the student writer to further limit a subject.

Examples of a limited subject:

American pop art as a radical approach to the idea "art as communication."

Implications of recent studies of ecological interaction of plant and animal life in Monument Valley.

The two examples above, although adequately limited, still exist as topics. Each remains to be written as a thesis statement.

Examples of a thesis statement:

American pop art fails as a radical approach to the idea "art as communication."

Recent studies of ecological interaction of plant and animal life in Monument Valley prove that the recreation area should be closed for at least a decade.
PRACTICE: Rewrite the following sentences by limiting the topic and then writing the sentence into an adequate thesis statement.

Example: I like the new restaurant.

Melbee's Restaurant in Mission, Kansas, creates tasty gourmet entrees that are just the right amount for average appetites but are also rather pricey for the average pocketbook.

1. The book was good.
2. I enjoyed the movie.
3. Public school education is failing.
4. Television is bad for children.
5. College is different than high school.
6. After eating, we had some really good entertainment.
7. Books are expensive.
8. Taxes are too high.
9. My teacher is hard.

10. Communication skills are important.

Writing Center