

# Common Thesis Errors

## Too Broad, Too General

- The subject of the thesis should be **limited** (focused on one aspect of the topic you are interested in) and the predicate should be **specific** (making an original argument about the significance, effect, or nature of the subject).
- Make sure your subject of your thesis is NOT just a character's name or a major theme.

NO: "Beowulf is a hero."

NO: "Sir Gawain fails because of the lady's temptations."

NO: "Racism creates many issues in society."

# Repredication

- Sometimes, the predicate of the thesis can be used as the subject when revising the thesis.
- If the predicate contains the reason or cause for the subject, it is likely that the predicate should become the subject.

NO: “Sir Gawain fails because of the lady’s temptations.”

YES: “The Lady’s temptations cause Gawain’s ultimate failure.”

# Deepening Thought

1. Racism creates many issues in society.
2. Racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* creates many issues in Maycomb.
3. The rural families' racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* creates many issues in Maycomb.
4. The rural families' racism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* creates tension between residents of Maycomb.

# Statement of Fact

- The thesis must present a focused argument about the text, not a statement of fact about characters or the plot of the text.
- If stating the opposite seems impossible, then it is NOT an argument. An argument must be capable of being disproved.

NO: "Scout's tomboyish behavior goes against gender norms."

YES: "Scout's tomboyish behavior causes conflict in Maycomb."

# Passive Voice

- The thesis should use active voice (i.e. the subject is the thing **doing** the action of the verb).
- Passive voice flips around the subject and object of a sentence so that the subject is no longer **doing** the action, but having the action **done** to it.

NO (Passive Voice): Scout's ideas about what it means to be a lady **are challenged by** Aunt Alexandra's strength.

YES (Active Voice): Aunt Alexandra's strength **challenges** Scout's ideas about what it means to be a lady.

## Not Supported by Body Paragraphs

- The thesis might be strong, but if the quotations do not apply and the analysis does not support it, then the argument has not been represented as it should.
- Make sure your PoA and quotations support your argument well!