Argumentative Essay Thesis Examples

Debatable Thesis Statements:

Example 1

"At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution."

This is an example of a debatable thesis because reasonable people could disagree with it. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation's money. Others might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution.

Example 2

"America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars."

In this example there is also room for disagreement between rational individuals. Some citizens might think focusing on recycling programs rather than private automobiles is the most effective strategy.

Broad Thesis Statements

Example 1

"Drug use is detrimental to society."

There are several reasons this statement is too broad to argue. First, what is included in the category "drugs"? Is the author talking about illegal drug use, recreational drug use (which might include alcohol and cigarettes), or all uses of medication in general?

Second, in what ways are drugs detrimental? Is drug use causing deaths (and is the author equating deaths from overdoses and deaths from drug related violence)? Is drug use changing the moral climate or causing the economy to decline?

Finally, what does the author mean by "society"? Is the author referring only to America or to the global population? Does the author make any distinction between the effects on children and adults? There are just too many questions that the claim leaves open. The author could not cover

all of the topics listed above, yet the generality of the claim leaves all of these possibilities open to debate.

Narrow Thesis Statements

Example 1

"Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence."

In this example the topic of drugs has been narrowed down to illegal drugs and the detriment has been narrowed down to gang violence. This is a much more manageable topic.

Example 2

"At least 25 percent of the federal budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution."

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just the amount of money used but also how the money could actually help to control pollution.

Example 3

"America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts and care about the outcome."

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just what the focus of a national anti-pollution campaign should be but also why this is the appropriate focus.
Qualifiers such as "*typically*," "*generally*," "*usually*," or "*on average*" also help to limit the scope of your claim by allowing for the almost inevitable exception to the rule.