Writing a Thesis Statement

1. Start with a thesis idea
An essay is by definition a type of writing that conveys a central idea or assertion about some subject. The thesis statement establishes that idea—and the direction and tone of the whole paper.

Writing a researched essay is a process of working from a topic to information about the topic to ideas about the information (knowledge). A chart of the process might look like this:

**TOPIC:** what is the subject I want to talk about?

**INFORMATION:** (gathered from your experience, library sources, reading, interviews, videos, observation, the Internet) what do I know about this subject?

**IDEA:** What do I think about this topic? What you should get out of my paper (my message/ my idea about the topic).

THE THESIS STATEMENT comes about after you have your idea. Work from topic, express an idea about it, then craft a specific position (or "claim") about it.

(example: the topic of air pollution.)

Your idea: Air Pollution is a Problem.

Thesis becomes: The problem of air pollution affects not only our present health but our future life on this planet.

TOPIC SENTENCES help paragraphs connect to the thesis. The thesis statement for a paragraph is called a topic sentence, and it fulfills the same unifying, focusing role for the paragraph that the thesis does for the essay as a whole.

2. Rewrite and focus your sentence
as in the example below:

Ideas: The White House was built over many years, starting in 1792. It is the home of the President and also his office. But it is the Executive mansion, so although it is still a popular tourist stop, it must also be protected from terrorist attacks.

[blghh. Can't use it all--don't throw us everything in the paper!]

Focus: decide on the particular "angle" you want to take on this information. That's your focus.

Rewrite: As both home and executive office building for the President, the White House attracts attention not only from tourists but also from security officials concerned about recent terrorist activity.

[the author decided to look at the security angle]