

Motive—Thesis Nexus

Motive & Thesis work together in an essay and are both introduced in an introduction. **Motive** explains why an argument is important & why an audience should care. **Thesis** introduces the argument’s major assertion or claim, one that the rest of the essay will develop to support.

Motive

Motive involves a writer’s motivation or reasons for writing a particular argument, or what’s at stake: why the argument is important & why it should matter to others. **Motive** answers the questions “So what?” & “Who cares?” about your argument. What matters so much readers should keep reading?

Therefore, **Motive** helps determine *how* or *why* you are “entering a conversation,” i.e. by noting a disagreement or an oversight, by noting a contradiction, by offering a more complex or alternative interpretation, by asking a question, by posing a problem, etc. that your argument will respond to.

Motive also makes an essay more interesting—and *more yours*—because it provides readers with reasons to read an essay. Is there a question you will answer? Is there an oversight that others have failed to address? Is there a gap that you will fill?

A thoughtfully developed **Motive** gives your essay direction & focus. An interesting hook can help a writer to establish **Motive**. Without **Motive**, an essay is just an exercise that fulfills an assignment.

Thesis

An analytical (analysis) or argument essay must go beyond pointing out facts or describing processes or situations and asserting opinions: it must try to persuade its reader of an arguable claim ...

A **Thesis** offers an interpretation, perspective, analytical slant, or evaluation—in short, it introduces, starts, or presents an arguable “I SAY Assertion claim”—about an issue, idea, problem, or connection that you want to make. An effective **Thesis** will be a focused, evaluative “I SAY” Assertion claim that invites new thinking about an issue, more complexity, or a disagreement or counter-argument to prevailing wisdom or commonly held viewpoints.

A **Thesis** can be written as a statement or in the form of a question-answer sequence (Q/A) in which the **Thesis** assertion claim *begins* to answer what the remainder of the essay will *continue* to answer and support with evidence and analyses.

A **Thesis** can be written in first person (“I argue”) or stated more impersonally, and should contain one or more **keyterms** important in your argument to help establish argument focus.

Keep in mind that the **Thesis** is part of the overall rhetorical infrastructure of an essay’s argument: it is the initial “I SAY” assertion claim that introduces the essay’s argument. Subsequent “I SAY” assertion claims made in ACE paragraph will develop the argument’s strategy and trajectory (shape).

While the **Thesis** is the first rhetorical move of argument, it may or may not be the most important move (a counterargument & refutation paragraph may be the most important move).