Writing an Effective Thesis

What is a statement of purpose?
- Before you begin to write a thesis, you need a statement of purpose.
- A statement of purpose is a sentence that states in some detail what you want to learn about your topic. This statement guides you as you work so that you’ll read and take notes only on what’s needed for the project. This is not included in your essay. It’s just there to keep you focused as a writer and researcher.

Examples:
- Too General: I want to learn about the Dalai Lama.
- More Specific: I want to learn what role the Dalai Lama plays as the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people.
- Once you have a statement of purpose, you will begin to research what you have to say about the topic. This will be your thesis.

What is a thesis?
- A thesis is the main idea of your paper. It usually answers questions of who, what, when, where, how, and why. Answering these questions help to construct a well thought-out and detailed thesis.
- It is the road map of your paper. It tells the reader what your paper is about. Remember, that a thesis can be argumentative, informative, or an idea you want your reader to consider.

When is it written?
- It is written after you have done your research.
- The thesis statement is presented in your introduction and is backed up with evidence in the body of your paper. Each of your body paragraphs should include a main point that directly supports your thesis.

How do I write a thesis?
- Look again at your statement of purpose.
- Look through the information you have collected during your research.
- Make sure your thesis statement is something that can be supported with evidence throughout your paper. It should not be something too obvious or too general.

Examples:
- A weak thesis: World hunger has many causes and effects.
  - This thesis is too general. What specifically would the reader learn from your essay? What is the argument or information given?
- A strong thesis: Hunger persists in remote villages of India because jobs are scarce and farming is difficult in the infertile soil.
  This is a stronger thesis because it provides readers with information about a specific issue.