

Two Paths to Find Your Thesis

1 *The Lightning Strike—KABOOM!!*

This often happens when you've been turning your research question over and over in your head. Then while running, cooking, playing video games, standing in the shower, you KNOW what the answer is.



If this happens, write your thesis down right away. There is something exciting about an idea. The wording might change but you want to preserve the electricity in the idea.

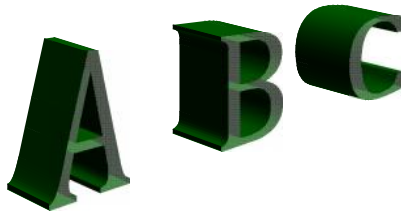
Your task then is to connect all your sources to that idea. How do they support or contradict your thesis. The relation to your thesis will govern what you say about each source in your essay. Looking at your sources in light of your thesis, will give your sub-arguments.

BTW—This is all in **Parts 4 and 5** of your paper, your original analysis & conclusions

2 *Step-by-Step, Inch-by-Inch..*

Pt. III

Step 1—Cluster your sources into a few key ideas—A, B, C



Step 2—Decide what you think about those ideas

Pt. IV

Step 3—If I think that about A, B, C then the bigger idea that connects those ideas is “D,” which stands for a **DOPE THESIS!**

Pt. V

Step 4—You then go back and revise steps 1 & 2 so it seems like you knew your thesis all along



Ahhh!!! Figuring out your thesis this way often feels like finding an oasis after crossing a thirst-inducing desert of LOGIC

Outline Worksheet

Part I

Do this last! This should **summarize** all the major points in your paper. Your thesis should be in here, somewhere. You should state your research question somewhere. Say what you want in a relaxed, readable, but compelling way.

Main Summary Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

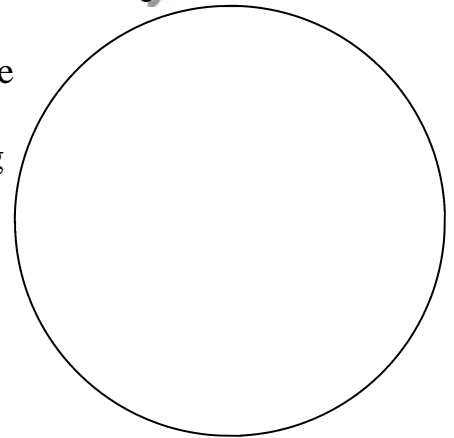
Thesis?? -

Part II

Context—What's happening in society that makes your question important?

Write your answers here

Context—What's the history of people thinking/researching your topic?



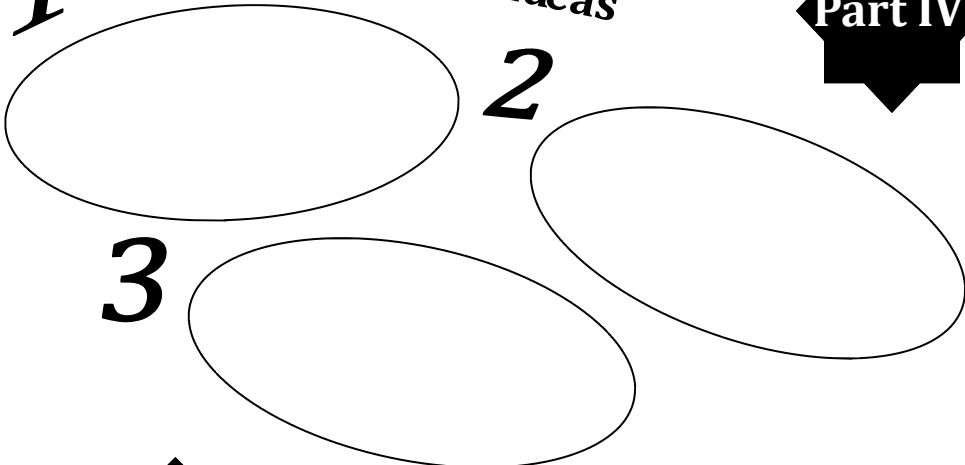
Part III

Cluster your sources around ideas

1

2

3



Part IV

THINK COMMENTARY
What do Ideas 1, 2, and 3 say about your research question? What are their Strengths and Weaknesses?

Part V

Conclusion
(aka—Thesis) =

Points from Part IV lead naturally to your thesis that you then unpack in part V. Answer the "So What?"

Dope Thesis Goes Here:

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.

Your thesis statement should address your research question; take a stand on an issue; justify discussion; set up contrast; contain 1 main idea