

**NAGOYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY WORKSHOPS 2016**



# **Academic Writing** *and* **Logical Thinking**

**May 18 ~ June 15, 2016**

**Instructor: Dr. Paul Lai**

# NAGOYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY WORKSHOPS 2016



## Review



# Main point of my talk

学術論文の基本的な目的は、結論へと至る論理的ステップを提示することによって、論文の主張する結論を受け入れるよう読者を説得することである。

**Training of logical thinking skills  
is needed in order for your thoughts  
to be communicated properly  
in an academic paper.**

WRITING  
教養教育院



# Main point of my talk

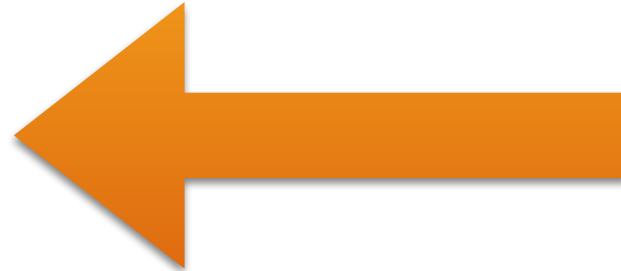
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**Training of logical thinking skills  
is needed in order for the paper's  
thesis statement to be **convincing**.**

WRITING  
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Thesis  
Statement



Supporting  
Premise(s)

Peter is either at his office or the library.  
Peter is not at his office.  
**Peter is at the library.**

Abstract

Introduction

Others



## (Homework)

(i) Think about a paper that you are planning to write.

(ii) Develop a thesis statement for the paper.

(iii) Presenting your thesis statement on June 15.



# How to make your writing clear

Group work:

Discuss with your group members about the paper that you are planning to write.

Summarise the main point of the paper.



# Thesis Statement

**Being Clear**

# Being Clear in Communication

# Having a Clear **Thesis Statement**



# *The Thesis Statement Recipe*

*Textbook for  
the Nagoya University Library workshop series on  
Academic Writing & Logical Thinking Skills*

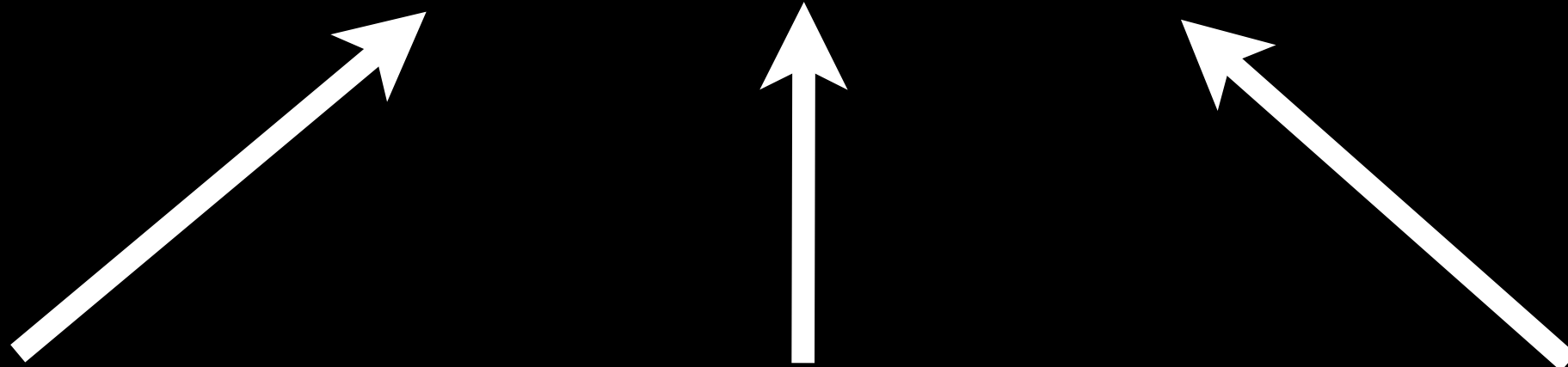


*Written by  
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Director, Nagoya University Writing Center  
(Mei-Writing)*

Concise Summary  
of the  
main research claim

one-sentence statement that  
encapsulates  
the main claim  
of your research paper.

**Thesis Statement**



**Support 1**



**Support 2**



**Support 3**



Although a thesis statement is normally written in just one-sentence, it is different from a normal sentence in many aspects.

**(I) A thesis statement must have a truth-value.**

**In other words,**

**a thesis statement must be either true or false.**

(2) A thesis statement should be objectively verifiable.

In other words,

The truth value of a thesis statement should be independently verifiable from a third person point of view.



(3) The truthfulness of a thesis statement needs justification through argumentation.

In other words,

a thesis statement is not merely a representation of some factual event.

it is a **belief statement** that *such and such is the case*, whose truthfulness requires justification through collecting evidences and arranging them in a convincing way.



#### (4) A good thesis statement is not trivial.

Consider the following two belief statements:

*“The earth orbits around the sun.”*

Unlike when it was first claimed by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543, the thesis statement now is trivial.

*“The orbiting speed of the earth is getting slower, and after 10,000 years later one day will last 30 hours.”*

This thesis statement is not trivial, and requires justification.

(5) A good thesis statement should be as specific as possible so that its truth values can be verified effectively.

Compare the following two belief statements:

*“Japanese university education system is problematic.”*

Too broad, what “problematic” means is unspecified.

Trivial too, no education system is unproblematic in practice.

*“One fundamental problem in Japanese university education is the lack of logical thinking education.”*

A specific problem is mentioned. And the thesis statement requires justification through argumentation, etc.

(5) A good thesis statement should be as specific as possible so that its truth values can be verified effectively.

For the same reason that it should not be a broad statement, a thesis statement should not be a vague statement.

e.g. “Smoking is hazardous to health.”

Too vague, what “hazardous” means is unspecified.

Trivial too, we all know that smoking is hazardous to health.

One possible improvement:

“Smoking is likely to cause heart disease.”

(6) A good thesis statement should have a non-compound sentence structure.

Everything in the thesis statement must be proven.



# Group Exercises

**Thank you very much!**

*Writing Is Thinking*