How to Develop a Thesis Statement

1. **Restate the question.**
   A *question is not a thesis*. A thesis is typically a 1-sentence statement about the overall point of your essay. Find the main question in your writing prompt and rewrite the question as part of a declarative sentence.

**EXAMPLE:**
The Writing Prompt
Select a poem from the textbook that speaks to you on a personal level. Describe the poem and explain how that poem is relevant to your life.

**The Writing Prompt’s Main Question**
How is the poem relevant to your life?

**The Question as a Statement**
The poem "The Road Not Taken" is relevant to my life.

2. **Expand your thesis.**
Your essay should be unique to you, so your thesis should also be unique. If your thesis could work for your classmates’ essays just as well as it works for yours, it needs more specific details.

**EXAMPLE:** The poem "The Road Not Taken" is relevant to my life.

**BETTER EXAMPLE:** The poem “The Road Not Taken” is relevant to my life because I have difficulty making decisions.

**BEST EXAMPLE:** The poem “The Road Not Taken” is relevant to my life because I have difficulty making those bigger life decisions, such as choosing a career or a place to live.

3. **Revise your thesis.**
Your thesis should always match the rest of your paper, but sometimes your paper’s content changes as you write. When you finish writing, read your thesis again and ask yourself if you need to change it to reflect what you said in the rest of the essay.

**EXAMPLE:** Your essay was supposed to be about choosing a career and choosing a place to live, but it mostly talked about deciding between two colleges that were in different places.

**NEW THESIS:** The poem "The Road Not Taken" is relevant to my life because I have difficulty making those bigger life decisions, such as choosing where to go to college.