



## Guidelines and Suggestions for Writing Focus Statements

Focus statements serve two important functions: they provide you, the author, with the means to stay focused on your subject, and they allow the reader to clearly understand what you want to express. Thus, a solid focus statement is a great start to ensuring that you have a solid body paragraph.

A good focus statement should:

- Be a piece of the writer's original thinking
- Be near the beginning of the paragraph
- Give a general idea of what the paragraph is going to cover
- Produce a claim that ties back to the thesis
- Provide a transition from the previous paragraph

**Ineffective focus statement:** The Salem Witch trials began by two girls lying.

**Effective focus statement:** When examining the court records from Betty Parris and Abigail Williams, we can see that their testimonies were often contradictory with earlier statements they had made, which caused some to doubt the truthfulness of the girls' statements.

There are a few times when a focus statement is not needed. For instance, if you are narrating a series of events, or if your paragraph continues developing an idea that you have already introduced (with a focus statement) in the previous paragraph. However, most of the time, a focus statement is essential to each body paragraph.

For more information on writing focus statements, see:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/606/01/>

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category\\_id=3&sub\\_category\\_id=4&article\\_id=79](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=3&sub_category_id=4&article_id=79)

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