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main idea that can be adequately developed in the number of paragraphs or pages you have been assigned to write.

✗ **Too broad:** People are unhealthy for many reasons.

✓ **Adequate focus:** The diet of many American teenagers is unhealthy.

If you've been assigned to write a short essay, you wouldn't even be able to list all the reasons people are unhealthy. You'd be much better off focusing on a specific group of people and/or a specific reason or reasons why they are unhealthy.

✗ **Too narrow:** American teenagers consume too much salt.

✓ **Adequate focus:** The diet of many American teenagers is unhealthy.

While you might be able to develop a good paragraph about the diet of American teenagers being loaded with salt, unless you are taking a nutrition class that requires in-depth reporting, it's unlikely you'd have enough information to develop an entire essay around this topic.

Blueprinted Thesis

A blueprinted thesis lists in a series the major points the essay will develop. The points should be listed in the order that they will appear in the body paragraphs. The list may appear in the thesis or in a separate sentence after the thesis. The major points in the series must be **parallel**. In other words, areas listed in the thesis should be expressed in the same grammatical form (see Chapter 38).

Because some instructors prefer a blueprinted thesis and some do not, you should check with your instructor to find out whether a list of main points should be included or not.

Peer Example

Dan

“In the introduction to my essay on Raintree, I state in one sentence my thesis and list the main points I use to develop the thesis. In the essay, I develop the points in the same order as I list them. All three points are nouns, and the pronoun “its” is repeated with all three elements to emphasize their symmetry.”

Raintree is a great place to take the entire family out to dinner because of **its convenience, its menu, and its atmosphere.**