

Thesis statements

1 What is a thesis statement?

The *thesis statement* is the sentence that tells the main idea of the whole essay. It can be compared to a topic sentence, which gives the main idea of a paragraph. It usually comes at or near the end of the introductory paragraph.

2 Look at the essay in exercise 1 on page 57 again. Underline the thesis statement.

3 In these introductory paragraphs, underline the thesis statement. Then circle the topic and draw another line under the main idea in each thesis statement. Share your answers with a partner.

a.

Before I travelled to the UK last year, I thought that British food was just fish and chips, roast beef, apple pie, rice pudding and endless cups of tea. These foods are popular in Britain, but during my travels, I discovered that there is so much more to eating in the UK. People from all over the world have made their home in Britain, and they have brought with them their own food. Even in small towns, you can find Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants, amongst others. The UK can be divided into different regions that each has its own characteristic foods influenced by the culture of the people who live there.

b.

Everybody knows the koala, that sweet Australian animal that resembles a teddy bear. Although koalas look like toys, they are actually strong climbers and spend their days in the treetops. Mother koalas carry their babies around from tree to tree in a pouch, or pocket, on their stomach. Although there were millions of koalas in Australia in the past, they are now a protected species of animal. As a result of human population growth, deforestation and hunting, the number of koalas has declined.



c.

Taoism is an ancient philosophy from Asia that places great importance on the natural world. Taoists believe that spirit can be found in every person or thing, living or non-living. For the Taoist, even a mountain or a stone contains spirit. Lao Tsu, a Taoist writer and philosopher, said, 'People follow earth. Earth follows heaven. Heaven follows the Tao. The Tao follows what is natural'. For thousands of years in China and other Asian countries, gardens have been an important way to create a place where people can feel the spirit of the natural world. Creating a Taoist garden is an art. No two Taoist gardens are exactly alike, but all Taoist gardens include four essential elements: water, mountains, buildings and bridges.