



Writing Thesis and Topic Statements

October 2014

Plan of the Session

■ Presenting

- Communication as a system
- The concept of thesis statement (TS)

■ Showing

■ Examples, structure of TS

■ Recognizing TS

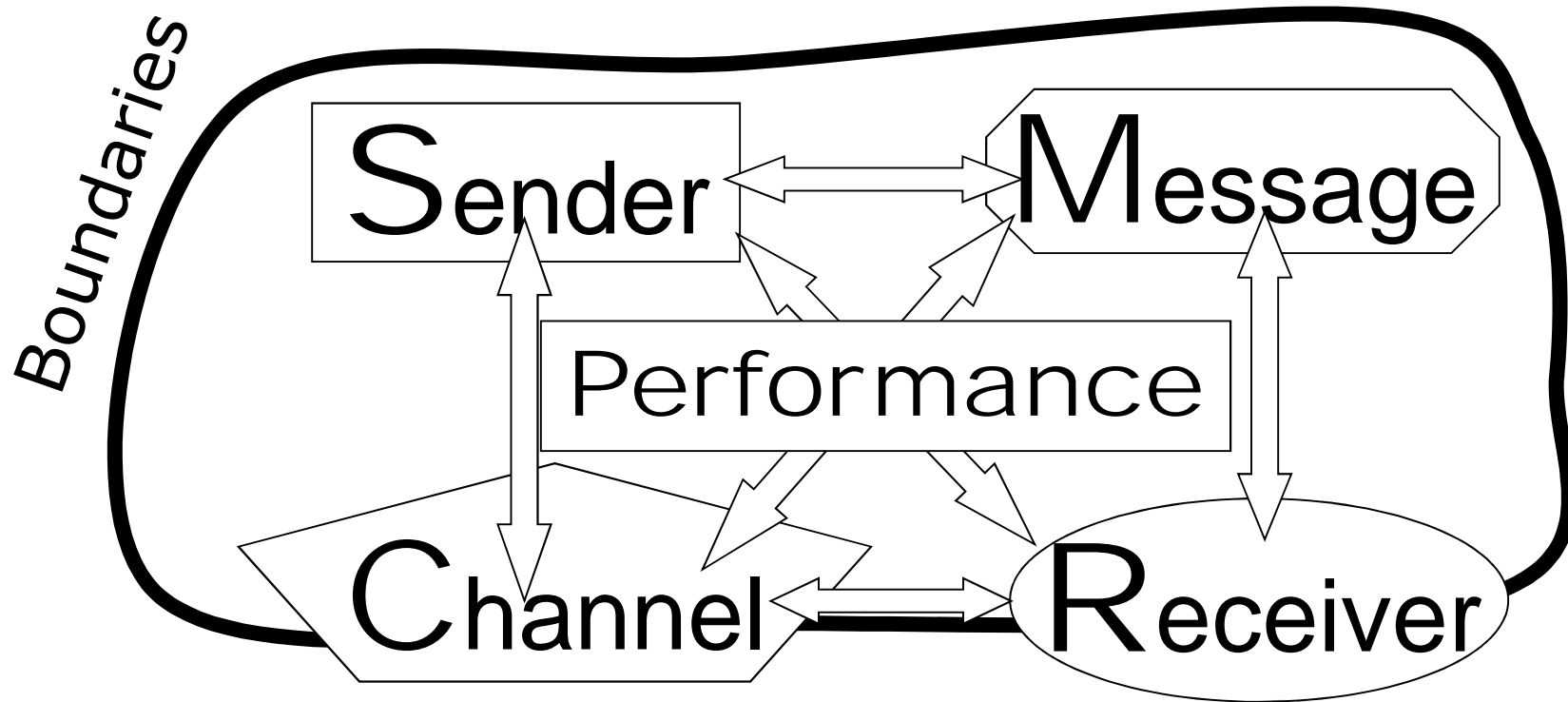
■ Building TS

■ Showing relationship TS → text

Next file: Building thesis statement (*3-Approach for Building TS & Paragraphs.pptx*)

25 key slides/48 total (with examples) time: min. 3 hours

The Communication System



Objective Size Form Environment
Time Duration Venue

Element # 2 of the system

Sender

The Message:

**Explains/details a main
idea → Thesis Statement**

Receiver

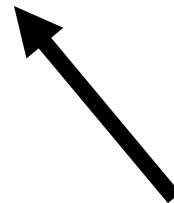
Channel

**“M” is an
Expansion of a
thesis statement
(TS)**

The topic



**Busy readers
read selectively.**



The comment

The central idea has two parts

<i>The topic</i>	<i>The comment</i>
Most readers of the real word	Read selectively
<i>Which one to develop?</i>	

Structure of the Thesis Statements Topic + Comment.

**Subject of
the main
verb
S**

+

**The remaining
parts of the
sentence
V-...O-...-C...
(predicate)**

The Thesis Statement (TS)

- **Every writing should have a central idea or central message**
- **TS One or two sentences**
- **TS Serves as a summary of the message**

- **Thesis statement for a text (several paragraphs)**
- **Topic statement for a paragraph**
- **Thesis statement > Topic statement
and is more general**

An example of TS

The topic



**Speaking and writing
are not identical.**

The comment

Structure of TS

Subject + Predicate

The topic

+

The comment

A main clause or a sentence

An Example

Speaking and writing are not identical. Writing is not simply speech written down on paper.

Learning to write is not just a natural extension of learning to speak a language. We learned to speak our first language at home without systematic instruction; whereas, most of us had to be taught in school how to write that same language. Many adult native speakers of a language find writing difficult. A speaker speaks to a listener who is right there, nodding or frowning, or interrupting or questioning. For the writer, the reader's response is either delayed or nonexistent.

No. of words in cyan, white, yellow, and green?

**How to reconstitute the
thesis/topic statement if
it is missing?**

Several years ago, studies linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that governments required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes. Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also aggravates or promotes other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for the people with asthma and emphysema. It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are susceptible to common colds and flu.

1Several years ago, studies linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. **2**The evidence was so overwhelming that governments required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes. **3**Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also aggravates or promotes other health problems. **4**For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for the people with asthma and emphysema. **5**It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. **6**Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are susceptible to common colds and flu.

Sent no.	Smoking Cigarettes	Hazardous	To Health
1	Yes	yes	yes
2	yes	yes	yes
3	yes	yes	yes
4	yes	yes	yes
5	yes	yes	yes
6	yes	yes	yes

"Smoking is hazardous to your health. Several years ago, studies linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that governments required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes. Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also aggravates or promotes other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for the people with asthma and emphysema. Moreover, cigarettes are not only hazardous to health but expensive too. It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are susceptible to common colds and flu. Whether you get an insignificant cold or the major killer, cancer, smoking cigarettes is hazardous."

The Thesis Statement

- **Indicates scope, purpose, and direction of writing**
- **Sets up/Identifies relationships between all parts of the message**
- **Is a road map for the message**
- **Directly answers essential questions about the message M.**

Further Properties of the Thesis Statement

- **Should be concise and well written**
- **Should be specific**
- **Should be general & needs support**
- **Should initiate the "what" question & the "why" question.**

Further Tips

- Not all texts require thesis statements!
- Thesis statements are not statements of fact: aluminum is lighter than iron.
- Thesis statements are not statements of opinion: “I think that volume of sales is simply the result of the price of the commodity.”

Tips for Writing Good Thesis Statements

- **Avoid burying the thesis statement in the middle.**
- **Avoid vague words.**
- **Connect two large statements to signal relationship:**
 - **by conjunction (but, for, so, yet) or (though, because, if, when, While, ...)**

**Cohesion of the text
is achieved through**

**Tying all paragraphs (case of thesis
statement)**

**Tying all sentences (case of topic
statement)**

TS: ➔ to test cohesion of the paragraph

"Smoking is hazardous to your health. Several years ago, studies linked the intake of tar and nicotine, found in cigarettes, with the development of cancer in laboratory animals. The evidence was so overwhelming that governments required cigarette manufacturers to put a warning on the outside of each package of cigarettes. Aside from the most serious and dreaded disease, cancer, cigarette smoking also aggravates or promotes other health problems. For example, smoking can increase the discomfort for the people with asthma and emphysema. Moreover, cigarettes are not only hazardous to health but expensive too. It can give one a "smoker's cough" and contribute to bronchitis. Finally, recent studies have shown that cigarette smokers are susceptible to common colds and flu.

Define the type of statement (thesis or topic) for the for the following:

- ✓ **The societal cost of street accidents is high.**
- ✓ **Pollution in Greater Cairo has reached alarming proportions.**
- ✓ **Some privatized companies are real success stories.**
- ✓ **Risk is not addressed in engineering education.**

**Before Writing the Text/Paragraph,
build the Thesis/Topic Statement.**

How To Build?

- 1- Identify keywords (KW)**
- 2- Group KW**
- 3- Cast KW into TS structure.**

**Next file: Building the thesis
statement (*3-Approach for Building
TS&ParagraphsCVRD.pptx*)**