

## Developing a Thesis for a Literary Analysis Paper

Basically, the thesis statements for all literary analysis papers follow this general formula:

Literary convention(s) (optional)	Author/Title	active verb *	the point you are making (focus/perspective/theme)
	"The Secret Lion" by Alberto Alvaro Rios	explores	how children use fantasy to cope with reality.
	"The Secret Lion" by Alberto Alvaro Rios	examines	the ways in which the narrator of the story and his friend are "victimized" by their society.
The point of view in	"The Secret Lion" by Alberto Alvaro Rios	reveals	both the perspective of the child as he deals with the inequalities in his life and the perspective of the adult narrator who looks back with anger on those lessons learned.
The theme of	"The Secret Lion" by Alberto Alvaro Rios	examines	the difficult lessons children learn as they grow up and things get taken away.
	In "The Hunter," E. L. Doctorow	weaves	setting, style, and characterization** together to create a tension of oppositions: setting and character, cold and warmth, death and life.
	In "St. Peter and the Angel," Denise Levertov	mirrors	one such instance [when that seemingly distant Divine Being crashes through our misconceptions and declares, "I AM GOD! I have always been here!" in] . . . the mystery of the release of Saint Peter, and the bigger mystery of the Christian life.

\* Verbs like *reveals*, *explores*, *shows*, *examines*, *discusses*, *develops*, *investigates*, *describes*, *depicts*, *argues*, *expresses*, *criticizes*, *compares*, *illustrates*, *portrays*, and so on.

\*\* Note in this example the literary conventions are worked into the point being made.

The following thesis includes all the elements above but organizes and develops them in language that is more interesting:

In Mark Helprin's "North Light," the narrative point of view is interlaced with an atmosphere of tension like a drawn bowstring, woven back and forth between scene and exposition, between telling detail and significancies.

Your introduction will provide any needed background for understanding your thesis such as definitions of literary conventions being explored (especially if those definitions are not standard or if a new view of these is being presented), examples or illustrations of the key idea being explored in this essay (the point you are making), or a discussion of other works by the author and how this story fits in or relates to the author's life and/or work.