

# Developing a Thesis Statement

## Example 1

Attempt one:

The environment matches Roderick Usher's internal mood.

*The student needs to be more precise, add a layer of sophistication, and embrace more complexity in stating the central claim.*

Attempt two:

The oppressive, saturnine external atmosphere is a physical representation of Roderick Usher's internal oppression of self – his identity as an Usher and the legacy of the Ushers.

*This attempt shows improvement, but it still lacks clarity.*

Attempt three:

The oppressive and saturnine external atmosphere represents Roderick Usher's internal oppression of self – of his identity as an Usher and of the family legacy. The Ushers' stagnation – their family line – has been represented by the claustrophobic environment of the house and the atmosphere surrounding it. His suffering is a result of external and internal entrapment.

*A fine thesis idea, but sentence structure and diction need some reworking. Nevertheless, it will serve as a fine organizing principle for a literary analysis essay.*

## Example 2

Attempt One:

The tarn is a mirror that distorts reality.

*Incomplete thesis; it needs to be anchored in the story more precisely.*

Attempt Two:

The double imagery Poe offers us in the story is exemplified in the tarn. This symbol is given to us to suggest the story is a dream.

*This attempt still lacks clarity. The ideas are interesting, but they are colliding into each other. The articulation is not coherent yet.*

Attempt Three:

Double imagery makes us look twice – is everything as it appears in this story? The tarn is the source of this questioning, as it

is the initial image of reflection, of distortion that sets the reader questioning whether what follows in the story is dream or reality.

*This attempt needs attention in terms of clarity and recasting question as statement. It certainly is improved, however, as complexity is embraced and coherence is attained. Here sentence structure can be improved for better flow, but the organization of ideas is fine.*