Topic Sentence/Working Thesis/Fully Realized Thesis

Many people confuse a sentence that states a topic with a thesis sentence. It's good to know the topic of your paper, but st t n t does not substitute for a thesis sentence.

Topic-Stating Sentence

I will research how the Seneca Falls Convention in the 19th century helped women to fight for equality.

This "topic stating sentence," as you can see, doesn't make a claim. It tells us what the writer pl ns to o but not w t s t nks. By talking with your instructor about what interests you about this topic, you may form a working thesis sentence. In the above topic sentence, for example, you might think about who was involved in the convention and what ultimately resulted from their efforts. You might write a working thesis sentence, like the following, to set some boundaries on your topic:

Working Thesis Sentence

In the summer of 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, working with Lucretia Mott, Martha C. Wright and Mary Ann McClintock, organized a convention in a small town in upstate New York that resulted in a ground-breaking document, the "Declaration of Sentiments."

Of course you need to find evidence to support this claim. Why was the document "ground-breaking"? From reading it, you realize that it resembles Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence. With more research, you might discover the reason why Stanton modeled the "Declaration of Sentiments" on such an important U.S. document. You might learn new terms to describe the process of persuasion such as pathos or logos. In your final drafts, you might refine your sentence as follows:

Fully Realized Thesis Sentence

Following Thomas Jefferson's lead, Elizabeth Cady Stanton wrote the "Declaration of Sentiments" not only for the women attending the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, but, for men across the country, who would recognize and perhaps be persuaded by the male-based rhetorical strategies, an approach that she continued to employ throughout her life.

What is the difference then between a fully realized thesis sentence (such as above) and a working thesis sentence? A working thesis sentence m k s l m (what). A fully realized thesis sentence xpl ns l m (why and/or how). Write a sentence to describe your topic. Now write a working thesis sentence. What do you need to know in order to refine this thesis sentence?