

Student says:

After reviewing my research, I am actually having a hard time deciding on a working thesis. I started out wanting to argue for the legalization of marijuana, but I do actually feel more nervous about this than when I started. I was really basing my opinion on some ideas that I now know are myths: that marijuana is not addictive and that so many people are in prisons for marijuana convictions. Of course, I was also basing my opinion on what I know about alcohol and the fact that it is legal, so I don't think I'm ready to change my mind, though the more I read, the more I think maybe both should be illegal. But, that is a really impractical, and a really controversial argument, and I am losing my focus--research tends to do that sometimes.

Despite the problems with my original thinking, I've decided to move forward with my argument that marijuana should probably be legal, though I am going to have to write a really, really careful argument.

With that in mind, I have to try to develop a working thesis that fits my goals, though I know this can be changed later.

My first attempt at a thesis went something like this:

American sentiment about marijuana is changing thanks to a great understanding of the drug and its effects. It is now time to work to legalize marijuana, though with some careful consideration and clear limitations.

Well, I am capturing the ideas I want, but I feel this is too wordy for sure!

So, I'm going to try again.

Due to a greater understanding of marijuana and its effects, American sentiment about the legalization of marijuana seems to be changing, and with good reason. With careful regulation, marijuana should be a legal drug in the state of Texas, just as alcohol is legal.

I should maybe avoid bringing the alcohol issue into my thesis, though I will address this in my paper. It is just not going to be the main focus, I think. I wonder what my thesis would look like without that last part tagged on at the end.

So, here is my third attempt:

Due to a greater understanding of marijuana and its effects, American sentiment about the legalization of marijuana seems to be changing, and with good reason. With careful regulation, marijuana should be a legal drug in the state of Texas.

I think this feels like a good working thesis. It's technically a two-sentence thesis, but I'm actually thinking the first sentence is maybe more of a transition to my thesis. I think the key is that I'm making a clear assertion, and I have a narrow focus in that second sentence.

I may need to revise this thesis later, especially as I still feel unsure about my overall argument, but I am going to settle on this for now. I have done a lot of research and still haven't changed my mind, though I know that is still an option.