

Revision Station Handout: Common Thesis Mistakes & Fixes

FILE NAME: Thesis_Revision_Station_Handout.pdf

❖ Thesis Revision Station

Find the flaw, fix the thesis

MISTAKE 1: Missing Organizing Principle

✗ Weak Example:

“There are three types of students.”

❑ Diagnosis:

No criterion for classification. Readers don’t know *how* you’re grouping them.

✓ Fix:

Add your organizing principle:

“Students can be classified **by study approach** into three types: procrastinators, steady workers, and overachievers.”

MISTAKE 2: Unnamed Categories

✗ Weak Example:

“Social media users can be classified by engagement level into different types.”

❑ Diagnosis:

Types aren’t named—thesis is vague.

✓ **Fix:**

Name them:

“...into three types: **lurkers, casual sharers, and content creators.**”

MISTAKE 3: Vague or Overly Broad Topic

✗ **Weak Example:**

“People can be classified into different personality types.”

❑ **Diagnosis:**

Too broad. Which people? Which context?

✓ **Fix:**

Specify:

“College students can be classified **by stress management approach** into four types...”

MISTAKE 4: Multiple Organizing Principles

✗ **Weak Example:**

“Teachers can be classified by experience level and teaching style.”

❑ **Diagnosis:**

Two principles = confusing categories.

✓ **Fix:**

Pick one:

“Teachers can be classified **by instructional approach** into three types...”

MISTAKE 5: Categories Not in Logical Order

✗ Weak Example:

“Shoppers can be classified by spending habit into: luxury shoppers, budget shoppers, and mid-range shoppers.”

🔍 Diagnosis:

Order is random (luxury → budget → mid-range).

✓ Fix:

Reorder logically (low to high, or high to low):

“...budget shoppers, mid-range shoppers, and luxury shoppers.”

🛠 Revision Toolkit

Ask These Questions:

1. What am I classifying? (*Topic*)
2. What's my organizing principle? (*Criterion*)
3. Are all categories named? (*Clarity*)
4. Is the order logical? (*Flow*)
5. Does my thesis match my essay? (*Consistency*)

Try These Fixes First:

- Add “by [principle]” if missing
- Replace “several types” with actual category names
- Narrow broad topics with a specific context
- Choose one principle and stick to it
- Reorder categories for better flow

 **Practice: Revise These Theses**

1. “There are different kinds of pets.”

Your revision: _____

2. “Travelers can be classified by budget and destination.”

Your revision: _____

3. “Books can be grouped in many ways.”

Your revision: _____

Remember: A good thesis is a **map**—it shows where your essay is going.

Revise boldly!



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