

## Scholarship Essays: Thesis-Driven Narratives

A thesis-driven narrative demonstrates personal qualities about the writer through storytelling or relating experiences.

A thesis-driven narrative includes a **purpose**, or a claim about the writer. "Thesis-driven" means that the thesis frames and moves the narrative forward while giving the narrative significance.

### Before Writing

1. Identify the audience, and keep them in mind as you write:
  - a. Who will review your narrative? What, specifically, are they looking for?
2. Take time to brainstorm topics on how you might respond to the prompt:
  - a. Which details might be important, and which might not?
  - b. Do these details show the point you are trying to make?
  - c. How specific are these details? How might they stand out through unique and vivid descriptions?

### Writing a Narrative Thesis

The prompt will likely ask a **question**.

Example: How has your academic career prepared you for this graduate program?

Each writer will have a different response because the prompt asks a personal question. The answer to this question might be your **thesis statement**, so long as it sets up the focus of the narrative.

#### A possible answer (and possible thesis):

From a high school senior on academic probation to a college senior graduating on the Dean's List, my determination to set myself on the path to success throughout my academic career has prepared me to take on the demands of this graduate program. A thesis should:

1. Address all aspects of the prompt.
2. *Be supported by evidence*. Your evidence may be a relevant description, anecdote, or experience that shows an important quality relating to your thesis. For example, using the sample thesis above:
  - a. Describe a key moment when you realized you wanted to do better academically (make it vivid so the reader feels like they're there with you).
  - b. Explain how you went from being on academic probation to the Dean's list and what motivated you to change.
  - c. Who helped you perform better academically (Advisor? Parent? Friend? Professor?)
  - d. What extracurricular activities have added to your personal development?
  - e. What are the demands of the program, and which aspects of your experience have prepared you for them?

