The Implied Thesis

One of the most fascinating things about a thesis sentence is that it is the most important sentence in a paper - even when it's not there. Some of our best writers never explicitly declare their thesis. In some essays, you'll find it difficult to point to a single sentence that declares the argument. Still, the essay is coherent and makes a point. In these cases, the writers have used an implied thesis. Writers use an implied thesis when they want the reader to come to his or her own conclusions about the matter at hand. However, just because the writer doesn't declare the thesis doesn't mean that she was working without one. Good writers will have their thesis clearly stated - either in their own minds, or in their notes for the paper. They may elect not to put the thesis in the paper, but every paragraph, every sentence that they write is controlled by the thesis all the same. If you decide to write a paper with an implied thesis, be sure that you have a strong grasp of your argument and its structure. Also be sure that you supply adequate transitions, so that the reader can follow your argument with ease.

Implied, or unstated, thesis statements are tricky to manage in academic essays since academic writing is centered on argument and analysis: if your readers don’t know from the start what you want to prove to them, they can’t weigh your evidence against your proposal or easily follow the development of your ideas. Still, if you feel your audience might be hostile to your argument, an essay with an implied thesis might persuade your readers by accumulating evidence without stating a position outright.

A reader should be able to identify your thesis after reading your essay. To test yourself, ask several friends or classmates to read your essay and summarize your main idea into one sentence. If they can correctly identify your main idea, then your thesis, whether stated or implied, is clear. If after your test readers cannot identify your main idea, then you will need to revise again.

Sample paragraph:

Direct marketing today occurs either in the form of a direct response, which requires a salesperson to complete the sale, or by direct order, which is a sale made without a personal sales call. More broadly, direct marketing is the selling of products without a shop, as with Avon.com or Amway.com products. Telemarketing, catalog shopping, personalized mailings, and trial offers are all ways to conduct direct marketing.

The implied thesis: Direct marketing is the way online companies often conduct their business.

Web references:
http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/writing/thesis.html
http://nhjy.hzau.edu.cn/english/experiencing/4/skills/readingskills/MainIdeas/mainidea.html
Implied Thesis Practice

In your own word, write the implied thesis sentence on the lines below the corresponding reading.

1. When a group of Middle Eastern Muslim friends sit down to a meal, they begin by saying *Bismillah*, or “in the name of God.” Aside from washing the hands before eating, it is considered polite to eat with the hand, using the thumb and first two fingers; to detach choice morsels and offer them to a neighbor at the table; and to continue nibbling even after one is full. If one stops eating, others may feel it is necessary to stop as well, even though they have not yet satisfied their hunger. Guests are expected to talk about pleasant subjects and be entertaining, never to introduce a sad or angry note into the conversation. They compliment the hosts with the phrase “May your table always be generous to all!” meaning they hope they will be asked to dine there again soon.

   Once two people have eaten a meal together, they are expected to treat one another with friendship and honesty. If not, according to traditional belief, the food they have shared will bring a curse upon them.

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2. While lying in bed and resting may be relaxing, it is not a substitute for real sleep. Sleeping less than you individually require can make you feel grouchy and even unwell. Researchers have seen rats deprived of sleep become deathly ill in as little as a week. Even just disturbing one’s usual pattern of sleeping and waking can have unpleasant effects. When people fly across several time zones, for instance, or take a night-shift job, and have to adjust to a new schedule of waking and sleeping, they often experience fatigue, depression, and irritability. Oddly enough, no one understands exactly why we need to sleep at all. Although it might seem that the body and mind need periods of total inactivity, that does not really describe sleep. People’s brain waves are nearly as active during sleep as they are during periods of wakefulness.

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3. An aquatic algae (seaweed) called algin is used often in salad dressings, ice cream, and other food products to keep the ingredients from separating. Algae have also made an appearance in the beauty industry. For example, a trendy treatment called thalassotheraphy is a modern version of a treatment that was first used in France at the turn of the century. In thalassotherapy, the body is smeared with a seaweed wrap that is the consistency of creamed spinach. The desired result is to make the surface of the skin appear moist. Algae are also used in a variety of cosmetics, including creams and astringents. Extracts from some brown algae have antibacterial properties. Manufacturers of creams and lotions containing these extracts advertise the antiseptic nature of their products. Moreover, several types of seaweed have become popular staples at health-food stores for use in soups, stews, and salads.

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