Drafting and Writing
The Thesis

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OVERVIEW

- Organizing the thesis
- Producing the complete first draft
- Re-writing the first draft
- A good thesis
Organizing the thesis

“How do you eat an elephant?”
One bite at a time.

Useful: large binder and dividers
Important Components

- Title page
- Abstract
- Acknowledgements
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology chapter
- Results/Findings chapter
- Analysis/Discussion chapter
- Conclusions and recommendations
- References
Introductory Chapter

- Reason for research, overview of contents
- Relevant information:
  - Contextual background
  - Research
  - Problem
  - Rationale
Literature Review

- What has been researched before?
- How will your study fill the current research ‘gap’?
- Why is it necessary to conduct your research?
Methodology Chapter

- How research was done and why you did it
- Factors shaping this chapter:
  - Methodological approach (e.g., feminist, action-oriented, critical, ethnographic, etc.)
  - Type of research (e.g., experimental or non-experimental?)
What readers want to know

- What data did you not collect (type, scope, problems)?
- Why a particular type of data and not others (alternatives, relevance, issues)?
- How was data collected (methods, tools, levels of measurement, sampling procedures)?
- How reliable and valid were the methods used?
• What are the limitations of the data and methods (scope, quantity, depth)?

• What were the techniques used to analyze the data (content, semiology, conversation analysis, etc.)?

• What claims/inferences can be made about the data (generalizations)?
Findings Chapter

- Dependent on nature of your research, may be unnecessary
- May be combined with Analysis and Discussion chapter
- Consult supervisor
• Based on data collected: no extraneous data or assumptions
• Must have frame of reference
Conclusions & Recommendations Chapter

- Do not introduce anything new!
  i. Main findings of the research
  ii. Relationship of your work to the literature
  iii. Further research
The Abstract

- A summary of the whole research:
  - Purpose of the research
  - Methodology employed
  - Findings
  - Conclusions

Contents page (TOC)

- Avoid multiple numberings of chapters and sections : 3.1.1.2
Writing tips

- Outline!
- Use a word-processing template or planner
- Store any unused sections
- Record references *as you go*
- Keep research questions in view
# Thesis style planner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Style Name</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Paragraph</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter heading</td>
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<td>Main heading</td>
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<td>Reference for quote</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reference list</td>
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<tr>
<td>Table or Figure caption</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Keep your readers in mind
• Be prepared to make changes
• Talk to others and get feedback
• Set aside time for writing (between 2-5 hours per week)
• Make your work manageable
• Constantly review your work
The First Draft

- Clear writing – conventions of academic writing
- Academic style of writing
Clear writing

- Formal academic writing (tone)
- Basic sentence and paragraph structures
- Choosing vocabulary
- Good grammar, simple construction
- Complete sentence and idea: state precisely what you mean
- Express a single thought
- < 40 words in length; ideally 20 words
Avoid fancy words and fancy-sounding or long sentences
Use short, simple phrases and words
Consistent use of verb tenses
Active voice rather than passive → ensures clarity
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perambulate</td>
<td>Walk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize</td>
<td>Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commence</td>
<td>Begin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ameliorate</td>
<td>Improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peruse</td>
<td>Read</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Use words you are familiar with!*
Example:

Product choice has increased from xx models available in 1980 to xx models available in 2003, primarily driven by an increase in imported models. As a consequence, the market share of the domestic producers has decreased sharply.
Example:

Passive voice:
*The results were posted by the company.*

(subject) (verb)

Active voice:

*The company posted the results.*

(subject) (verb)
Follow:

**T** – Topic sentence/controlling idea

**E** - Explain, elaborate, define

**E** – Examples, evidence illustrations

- Between 100-200 words
- Avoid long paragraphs of 250+ words
- One main idea = one paragraph
- Signal and transition words → link ideas and paragraphs
Academic style of writing

- Present work clearly and succinctly
- Precise writing
- Straightforward expression
Rewriting the First Draft

Coherence and internal consistency

- Complete reference list (information match)
- Correct page number/s for quotations
- Chapter numbers, titles, and subheadings; cross-check with contents page
- Overall consistency of elements throughout
Proofreading, Editing and Formatting

- Grammar and typo errors, punctuation, spelling
- Academic content (expression)
- Read aloud for coherence of meaning
- Reference list – consistency in punctuation and referencing style (all essential details)
• At least 2 full drafts
• Have someone other than advisor read some sections (particularly the Introduction and Conclusion)
• Revise/refine as best you can → set a deadline for submission
A Good Thesis

- Well Presented
- Style & Structure
- A Clear Argument
- Knowledge of Relevant Literature
First impressions: Well presented

- Title – catchy and attention-grabbing
- Table of Contents – gives sense of organization and logic
- Abstract
  - Good clear summary of thesis
  - Captures reader’s attention
  - Examiner can tell if it’s quality and well-presented
  - Most widely published and read part of thesis
Characteristics of a good thesis

- Clearly defined research question: aim, objectives, hypothesis
- Sound knowledge and deep understanding of:
  - General subject area and specific study area
  - Key debates
  - Relevant literature
Revision Process Checklist

- Do your argument and purpose remain clear throughout the paper?
- Is your tone appropriate?
- Have you given your reader a sense of the current views on your topic so that s/he has a context in which to consider your argument?
- Does your paper’s introduction clearly introduce your idea? Explain its significance? Provide background information? Attract the interest of your audience? Provide a clear plan for the paper? Present your thesis clearly?
Revision Process Checklist

- Does the body of your paper cover your major points in a logical order?
- Is each of your major points supported by the appropriate amount of evidence and analysis?
- Do you make clear transitions as you move from point to point?
- Does your conclusion follow logically from your introduction and body?
Guide to the Presentation of the Thesis

Finally...

- Save frequently and print copies
- Save multiple copies
SUMMARY

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• Re-writing the first draft
• A good thesis