



How to write a thesis

If you are a student you will, no doubt, be required to write a thesis at some point during your studies. A thesis is a dissertation or a long essay, which, is usually written by a student working towards a degree. The thesis is based around a particular subject and is written using personal research and experience. The student puts forward a theory and will then have to prove this statement.

So do you start? In this article, we will give you some guidelines and helpful tips on how to write a successful thesis.

There is a set format which you will need to follow to present a complete thesis. Your thesis will need to contain a title page, table of content, abstract, a list of tables, list of figures, introduction, methods, findings, discussion, conclusion, recommendation, acknowledgement, references and appendices.

Now, this seems like a lot when you look at this list but do not let this overwhelm you. We are going to break it down and walk you through each of the requirements.

A Title Page

This section will need to contain the title of your paper, your information as the author, the institution and department in which you are working, research advisors or mentors and their institutions and email addresses.

Abstract

In this section of your thesis, you need to answer the following questions:

- What you did?
- Why you did it?
- How you did it?
- What did you learn?
- Why it matters?

This needs to be a concise, quantitative and reliable summary of the main details, methods, results and recommendations.

List of Contents

Here you will list all of your headings, subheadings and corresponding page numbers including tables, equations and images you have used.

Introduction

As a thesis is developed around proving a particular theory, this can sometimes take months. Therefore, it can be more effective to write your introduction after you have written the body of your paper. Use subheadings and provide the following information in logical segments:

- The introduction should be written in a way that it grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to read the rest of your paper.

- Your introduction should contain citations of any previous work done on the subject and how your work has expanded on those works.
- You will need to make a statement around the particular goal of your paper.
- You will need to provide your readers with the context and significance of your work by providing clear background information.
- The information should focus on the goal of your thesis and should be focused on the main question of your thesis.
- The introduction provides a "road map" you guide the reader through the scope of your work and how it is laid out.

Methods

Here you will provide the framework of your research that another researcher could use to duplicate your results. You will address how you gathered your data and how you analyzed it.

Findings

Your findings will be the outcome of the analysis of the data which you gathered. You can discuss related research and literature.

Discussion

This chapter serves to answer the "Why it matters?" question, you will discuss the implications your findings might have and how these relate to any theoretical body of knowledge related to the topic or profession.

Conclusion and recommendations

For the conclusion, you need to draw together all of the information you have provided into a concise summary which clearly explains how you have reached the recommendations you provide, relating to your subject.

References

Make sure that you list all the material and sources you have used in writing your thesis. Fortunately, nowadays there are reference management programs, these will help you to keep track of the many references you will need to cite at the end of your paper.

Appendices

These should be clearly marked and easy to reference the main body of your work.

Writing your thesis

So now that we have the framework for your thesis, we can get into the actual writing. To present a good thesis, you need to provide an arguable and definable claim, it cannot be vague or judgemental. You are presenting an opinion, which you need to support by offering arguments for your opinion and countering any possible arguments against it. Make yourself a schedule with deadlines for each section.

Remember that when you are undertaking such a large project you will need to be flexible and also give yourself time to write it, read it and then probably rewrite it a few times. Have one or two people that you can share your work with during the process, getting constructive feedback on your work as you go can be very helpful.

You need to provide as much supporting evidence as you can, you can do this by citing other thesis or presentations on the same topic. Figures, graphs and diagrams can be useful to illustrate your point. You can also add any personal experience you may have to offer.

While these facts need to be logical, clear and concise, do not lose sight of the fact that you need to keep your audience engaged. Whether they subscribe to your argument or not, the writing must be interesting enough to entice them to read further.