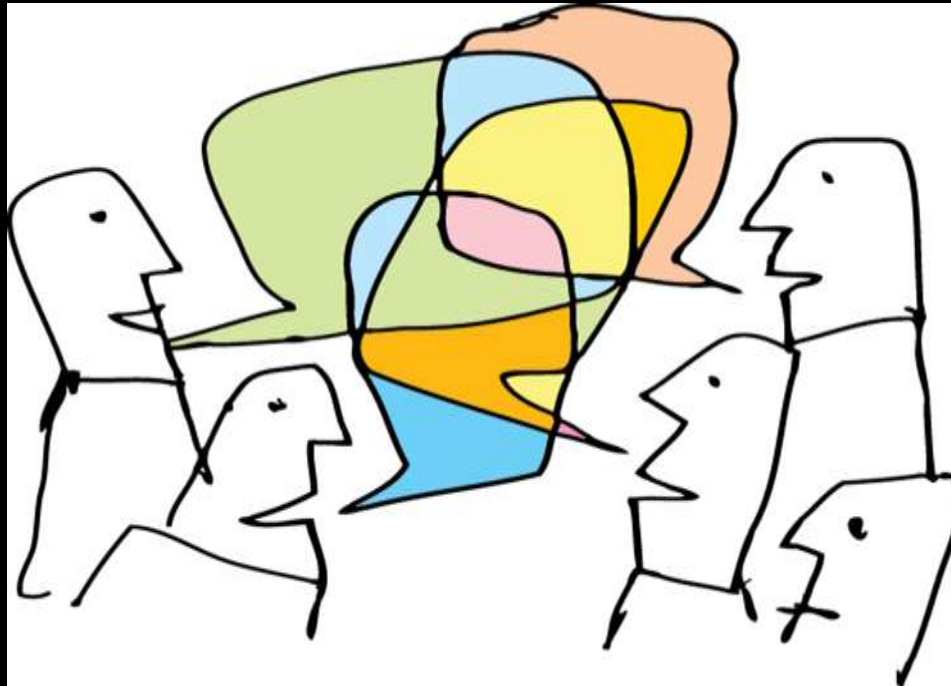


Writing Your Thesis Proposal

Dr. Erin Zimmerman
Director, Writing Center

Writing in your field
writing is a social practice



Why write as graduate students?

Why write as graduate students?

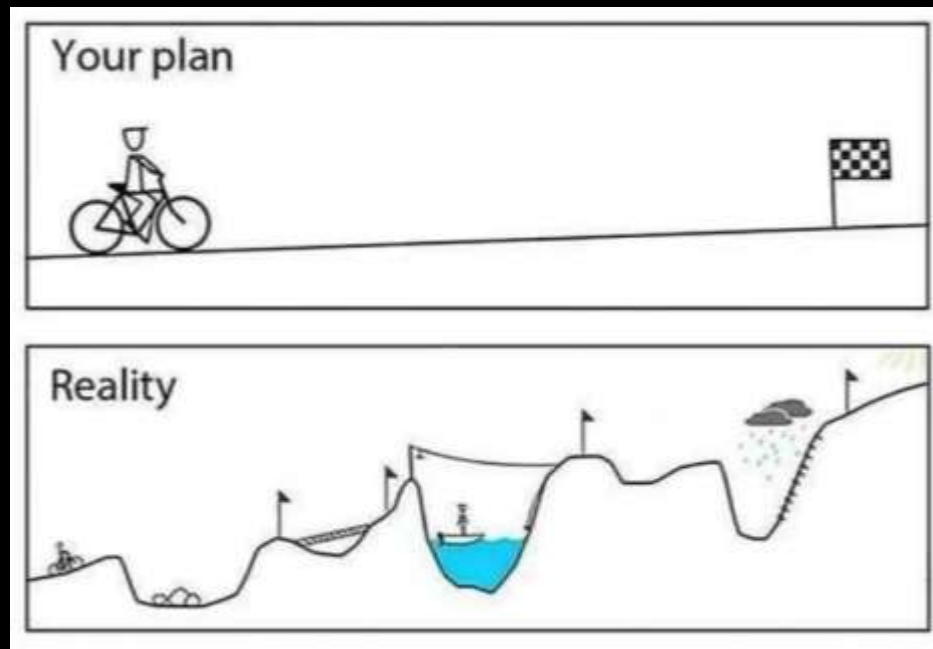
- To record and reflect—writing helps you think and learn
- To share and report—writing is an important way to communicate
- To persuade—writing helps others see the value of your work

Purpose of a Thesis Proposal

- To justify your research project in order to gain approval for it
- To organize the plan for collecting and obtaining data to help solve your research problem/question
- To help you think through the project from beginning to end, to anticipate problems and be prepared

Your Thesis Proposal

If you have an idea of where you're going and how to get there, it's easier to reach your destination!



Audience of a Thesis Proposal

- Your advisor
 - Your committee
 - Professors in your program
 - Professors in your faculty
- ★ Remember that they have different areas of specialty, and may not be experts on your topic—your goal is to explain yourself clearly!

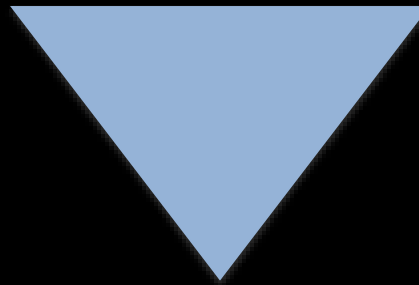
Structure of a Thesis Proposal

1. Title page
2. Abstract
3. Table of contents
4. Introduction / literature review
5. Thesis statement / research question(s)
6. Approach / methods
7. Preliminary results and discussion
8. Work plan including time table
9. Implications of research
10. List of references

Introduction & Literature Review

Build a rationale for your research question:

Information and discussion
from the literature



Research question

Steps for writing your literature review

1. Survey literature related to many aspects of your study
2. Choose the most relevant articles or other sources

Steps for writing your literature review

3. Read and take notes
4. Organize literature according to topic or argumentative claim
5. Draft and revise

Establish a research territory

Move 1

- a. By showing that the general research area is important,
- b. By introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area

Establish a niche

Move 2

- a. By indicating a gap in the previous research , or by extending previous knowledge in some way

Occupy the niche

Move 3

- a. By outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research

Move 1:

Establish a research territory

- a. By showing that the general research area is important,
- b. By introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area

Move 1:

Establish a research territory

- Why is the research you are doing important to your field?
- Who has performed research in this area before?

Move 1:

Establish a research territory

- What can you show from others' research to explain why you exploring this area is significant?
- What about their research informs what you are doing?

Move 2:

Establish a niche

- a. By indicating a gap in the previous research , or by extending previous knowledge in some way

Move 2:

Establish a niche

- What is the gap your research project fills?
- What have others done previously that help you demonstrate this gap?

Move 3:

Occupy a niche

- a. By outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research

Move 3:

Occupy a niche

- What is your research project/question(s)?
- What are you trying to discover through your project?

Move 3:

Occupy a niche

- What is your process for doing this research?
- What should readers of your report learn from your research?

Move 1:

Establish a research territory

- a. By showing that the general research area is important,
- b. By introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area



- Approach/methods
- Preliminary results and Discussion
- Work plan
- Implications of research
- List of references

Move 2:

Establish a niche

- a. By indicating a gap in the previous research , or by extending previous knowledge in some way



- Approach/methods
- Preliminary results and Discussion
- Work plan
- Implications of research
- List of references

Move 3:

Occupy a niche

- a. By outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research



- Approach/methods
- Preliminary results and Discussion
- Work plan
- Implications of research
- List of references

Citing Your Sources

- To show you've done the work, build your credibility
- To ethically use information from others
- To help your readers locate quality information

Where Do We Cite?

1. In the text of the paper
2. In the References Page,
Bibliography, Works Cited

Citing Others' Ideas

Quoting – copying and pasting
an author's language into your
writing

How to Quote?

Do

Put quotation marks around all of the words taken directly from a source

Cite your quote

How to Quote?

Don't

Rely too heavily on quotes:

- Ideas are often more important than language, so paraphrase more
- Be strategic about language that is useful, so take only what you need

Citing Others' Ideas

Paraphrasing – rearticulating an author's idea in your own words

How to Paraphrase?

Do Not

Copy and paste the original text into your paper.

How to Paraphrase?

Do

Read the idea/key piece of information within the source multiple times until you understand it. Then look away from the source and write out the idea in your own words.

How to Paraphrase?

Do

Synthesize others' work together rather than summarizing and listing each individual researcher's finding.

Good writers revise—a lot!



Resources for Writers

- The Writing Center
- Reading other proposals and theses
- Internet
- Purdue OWL, online style guides
- Your professors / advisors