

Thesis Writing Workshop: Selecting a Thesis Topic and Getting Started

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Why do a thesis?

- Personal satisfaction
- Advance your career
- Preparation for future graduate work
- Interested in research/scholarship
- Want to answer a question





Getting Started with 5 questions

- What topic am I interested in?
- Who can advise me in my topic?
- Do I have the skill set to complete my project?
- Is my project doable?
- Does my project have meaning?

What topic am I interested in?



Who can advise me in my topic?



Do I have the skill set to complete my project?



Is my project doable?



Does my project have meaning?





Outline for thesis project

- Background Information
 - provide a cursory overview of the "why" you need to conduct this investigation
- Purpose
 - what question are you trying to answer
- Hypothesis
 - set up hypothesis or hypotheses in the null form
- Importance
 - why is it necessary to perform this investigation



Outline for thesis project

- Subjects
 - what group of individuals will participate in your investigation
- Variables
 - what variables are you going to control or manipulate and what variables are you going to measure (independent and dependant)
- Design and methods
 - describe exactly (in short form) what you plan to do



Outline for thesis project

- Equipment
 - what is the equipment you plan to use
- Budget
 - is there any cost to performing this project
- Previous experience
 - do you have the necessary skills to conduct this research
- Collaboration
 - will there be any other individuals helping with the project



Outline for thesis project

- Data collection
 - provide an outline of your data collection procedures
- Data analysis
 - provide information on the most appropriate data analysis



Tips for getting started – humanities, social/behavioral

- Talk with a professor for whom you have written a paper (presumably a good one) to see if the paper could be expanded into a thesis
- Look at Dissertation Abstracts, which sometimes includes lists of masters theses
- View masters theses that are catalogued in the library
- Examine articles on topics that interest you--you may find something that you can explore further

Mechanics of getting started

- Know the program requirements for thesis
- Identify a thesis committee chairperson
- Establish a reasonable and workable timeline
- Use the GVSU resources:
 - <http://www.gvsu.edu/paces/library-skills-workshop-15.htm>





Potteiger's tips

- Read, read, read...and then read some more
- Select a topic in which you are highly interested
- Identify a thesis advisor that you can work with and that can help you complete your thesis in an exemplary manner



Questions not answered

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