

Graduate Studies

# Thesis Guidelines



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# Table of Contents

	Page
<b>THESIS GUIDELINES</b> .....	1
I. Purpose of the Thesis.....	1
II. The Adviser and the Student.....	1
III. Format of the Thesis .....	1
Preliminary Pages .....	1
Body of the Thesis.....	2
Supplementary Material .....	2
IV. Technical Requirements for Theses.....	3
Style of Writing.....	3
Margins and Spacing.....	3
Printing .....	3
Fonts/Typefaces .....	4
Reproduction .....	4
V. Oral Presentation .....	4
VI. Deadline for Submission .....	4
VII. Electronic Publication.....	5
 <b>EXAMPLES</b> .....	 5
Title Page.....	6
Approval Page.....	7
Abstract.....	8
Acknowledgments.....	9
Table of Contents.....	10
List of Tables and Figures .....	11
Chapter Headings and Margins .....	12
Table Style and Page Numbers .....	13
Figure Style .....	14
Bibliography/Works Cited.....	15
Appendix Title Page .....	16

# MASTER'S THESIS GUIDELINES

## I. Purpose of the Thesis

Writing a thesis offers the student an excellent research experience. Identifying and defining problems, locating and evaluating relevant information, devising and executing ways of getting clear answers to good questions, and mastering the conventions of research writing are the essence of scholarship.

## II. The Adviser and the Student

When a student begins work on a thesis, he/she will need to work closely with the thesis adviser. Some departments may also choose to assign additional “readers” to assist with the process. Their role will be explained by the student’s principal adviser. The adviser confers with the student frequently at times which are mutually convenient. It is the **student’s** responsibility to initiate these conferences.

Although thesis advisers may differ somewhat in the manner in which they work with graduate students, generally an adviser will expect the student to:

- a. Obtain the adviser’s approval of the topic selected for research.
- b. Submit an outline of the proposed thesis indicating the topic to be studied, the purpose to be fulfilled, the procedure to be used, and pertinent information the adviser deems necessary.
- c. Confer with the adviser frequently as the work progresses in order to obtain approval of every phase of the project. Failure to do this may result in the need to rewrite certain sections, or even the entire thesis.
- d. Obtain the adviser’s (and readers’, if required) final approval on the finished project.

While the student should look to the adviser for guidance and an objective critique as the work progresses, the student should not submit rough drafts which have not been neatly printed and proofed for spelling and grammatical errors. The adviser’s role is to help shape the content and explain some of the intricacies of scholarly style, not to serve as proof reader.

## III. Format of the Thesis

Theses adhere to relatively standard patterns. Most handbooks on form and style present these patterns in detail, and students are urged to consult them. The format guidelines presented here indicate patterns that are generally preferred.

The thesis contains: (a) preliminary pages, (b) chapters forming the body of the thesis, and (c) supplementary material, including end notes, bibliography/works cited and appendices.

### Preliminary Pages

Preliminary pages include a title page, an approval page, an abstract usually restricted to 500 words, acknowledgments, a table of contents, and, where applicable, a list of tables and charts. A foreword may also be included, if deemed helpful. Each section begins on a new page, usually numbered with lower case Roman numerals

See page 6 for a sample title page in the recommended form. Follow it carefully. The date should be the month and year in which the degree will be granted.

The approval page should conform as closely as possible to the example shown on page 7.

The abstract should contain a statement of the topic, an explanation of the methods and procedures employed, and a summary of the findings and conclusions. The abstract is usually limited to 500 words. References are generally limited, although a few citations from the thesis may be included (see example on page 8).

The acknowledgments section is used to recognize those who helped with the thesis project. The adviser, family members, people who helped collect the data, and anyone the student wishes to recognize should be mentioned here (see example on page 9).

The table of contents includes chapter headings and subheadings together with the page numbers on which these can be found. Upper case headings are used for chapters (see example on page 10).

The list of tables and figures (charts and graphs) should give the name and number of each table or figure and the page where it can be found (see example on page 11).

## **Body of the Thesis**

Most theses will include an introduction, a body and a conclusion, and major divisions will comprise chapters. The format for the body of the thesis will vary considerably depending upon the type of research being reported. The student should confer with his/her adviser about the best format for the specific topic and research methods employed. Some general guidelines follow:

**Historical Research.** This is often presented as an explanatory narrative with the literature review integrated into the body of the thesis. Chapters indicate the topics relevant to the story being told and the way it unfolds.

**Philosophical Research.** This may be reported in the form of an argument. Chapters contain exposition and/or analyses of factors and/or premises necessary to establish acceptance of the conclusion(s). The literature review may be a separate chapter, or may be integrated into the body of the thesis.

**Qualitative Research.** Much like historical research, qualitative research often proceeds as a narrative, with attention to voices and examples of the people who have provided the information central to the study. Chapters indicate the topics explored. *Analytic* qualitative reports use an objective writing style where the researcher's voice is subdued or silent (third person). *Reflective* qualitative reports are characterized by the presence of the researcher's voice (first person) and more literary freedom of expression is allowed.

**Quantitative Research.** This type of research may require a more formal structure than other types. Following the introductory chapter which introduces the problem and defines terms, there is usually a literature review chapter, a chapter on procedures, a results chapter, and a chapter containing discussion and conclusions. It is very important that the results/findings chapter contain **only** data collected by the researcher, with all interpretation and implications left to the discussion chapter.

Regardless of the format chosen, each chapter begins on a new page, two lines down from the top margin, with the chapter number and title centered (see example on page 12).

This description of the body of a thesis does not attempt to be full and comprehensive. The adviser can help the student develop each part of the thesis fully, carefully, and appropriately in terms of the topic being investigated and the procedures being employed.

## **Supplementary Material**

The final section of the thesis contains end notes (if used) and a complete list of sources used in completing the project, including sources not cited, but found to be valuable as background or procedural information. This section may be designated Bibliography, Works Cited, or other terms specified by the department.

It should be carefully prepared in the format of the style manual approved by the department concerned (see example on page 15).

Appendices follow the bibliography/works cited and contain examples of cover letters, test instruments, survey forms, interview schedules, computer programs, etc. Appendices are usually identified by capital letters. Each appendix should have a separate title sheet with the appropriate letter, and the title of the appendix (see example on page 16).

Material in appendices need not be formatted in the style of the thesis, but may be photocopied onto thesis grade paper, provided it produces a clean copy. The title pages for each appendix should have page numbers, and each page of material in the appendices should be counted in the page numbering. However it is not necessary to place thesis page numbers on this material.

## **IV. Technical Requirements for Theses**

### **Style of Writing**

While use of the first person may be appropriate for some theses, most are written in the third person. The student is referred to as the researcher or writer, but not the author (this is reserved for those who have published books). Academic standards of English usage, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization are expected.

Students are expected to obtain and **USE** the style manual recognized by the principal scholarly journals in their discipline (APA, MLA, etc.). This manual should be followed closely with respect to methods of citation, entries in the reference section (Bibliography, Works Cited, etc.), and other mechanical details (the sample thesis pages included in this booklet follow the style manual of the American Psychological Association). The adviser will help with issues not addressed in the appropriate style manual.

### **Margins and Spacing**

With the exception of footnotes, lengthy quotations, and the Bibliography/Works Cited, the entire paper should be double spaced. Only one side of the paper should be used.

Margins should be set to 1¼ inches at the top, bottom, and right side, with 1½ inches at the left to allow for binding.

The right margin should never be justified when using monospaced type faces such as Courier, and some style manuals for scholarly journals do not accept it even in proportional spaced fonts. The student should confer with the thesis adviser on this matter.

### **Word-processing and Printing**

Most word-processing software should have all of the features necessary for even the most complex thesis. Because the University has a site license for Microsoft Word, it might be the preferred choice because it opens up the possibility of using a variety of computers and printers available on campus.

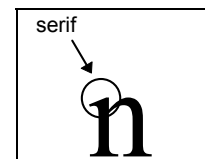
Whatever the software selected, the student should make frequent backup copies on floppy disks or other removable media and store these at different locations.

Virtually all laser printers and most ink jet printers should be capable of producing a finished copy of adequate quality. Laser printers are readily available on campus, and with some experimentation, students should be able to load their files in a computer lab and print their final drafts there. Note that True Type fonts found on most Windows computers print slightly differently from printer to printer, so anytime the

student changes printers, reformatting will be required. PostScript fonts do not pose this problem when printed on PostScript printers.

## Fonts

Modern word-processing has made available a variety of fonts (typefaces and sizes). For the thesis, students should choose a simple, serif font in 12 point type. Serifs are small marks attached to the upper and lower ends of the strokes of a letter (see diagram below). For both the business world and the world of serious scholarship, the “Times” fonts (Times in PostScript and Times New Roman in True Type) have been adopted as the “standard” fonts and are most appropriate for theses.



## Reproduction

Students must submit four copies of the thesis printed on 8½ x 11 inch white bond paper containing at least 25% cotton (a water mark on each page will clearly reveal the cotton content when held up to the light). These four copies will be bound. Two will be placed in the Rohrbach Library, one will be given to the adviser, and one will be returned to the student.

While one of the four copies may be an original, this is not required. Some laser printers may print well on cotton paper, but in general, ink jet printers do not produce a sharp image on paper with a high cotton content. If using an ink jet printer for the final draft, be sure to set the printer options to “Best Quality” and “Black-Only” and print a master copy on a quality paper designed for ink jets, such as Hammermill’s Jet Print or HP’s Bright White. Then have all four copies photocopied onto 25% cotton paper from this master.

Because sections of theses may be photocopied, microfilmed or digitized (usually in black and white) for broader distribution, color images should be used **only** in the appendices, and should be restricted to instruments that employ color as a variable. When used, color images should be reproduced by means of a color photocopier, color laser printer, or one of the newer color ink jets featuring archival inks.

A number of commercial printing firms in the area will make photocopies for a modest fee, but any high quality, plain paper copier is capable of producing acceptable results. Whatever method of reproduction is chosen, be certain that the copies are clean and that the paper contains at least 25% cotton.

## V. Oral Presentation

After a student has completed the thesis and has received the adviser’s (and readers’, when required) approval of it, an oral presentation of the thesis may be required by the academic department. The thesis adviser will assist the student with scheduling this presentation.

## VI. Deadline for Submission

In order for a student to graduate in a given semester, the four copies of the thesis, printed in final form on 25% cotton paper and approved by the department, must be submitted to the Graduate Office no later than the close of business on the last day of the final exam period. Approval pages must be signed.

A thesis binding fee must be paid at this time. Check with the Graduate Office in advance to determine the amount and method of payment required.

Departments will set their own deadlines early enough to allow for timely completion of the oral presentation (if required). It is the student's responsibility to meet these deadlines.

## VII. Electronic Publication

In the Spring semester of 2007 Kutztown University began offering students the option of submitting their theses to an electronic publication service. This process makes theses more widely available to scholars throughout the world, however there are a few steps the student must take to prepare a thesis for electronic publication. A guide to the submission process may be obtained from the registrar's office or online.

To participate in this service, the following changes must be made from the traditional formatting guidelines previously covered in this booklet:

1. Margins must be reduced to 1.25 inches on the left and 1 inch on top, bottom and right side. Unlike with paper submissions, **ALL** appendices must conform to these margins.
2. The Approval Page is omitted, and a Thesis Submission Form, which is not part of the electronic document, is used instead. This form will generally be provided by the thesis advisor, and once signed by the appropriate faculty members, must be submitted to the registrars office.
3. The thesis must be submitted to the electronic publication service in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format. The conversion process will be much simpler if the thesis is written as a single document file, rather than placing chapters into individual files. Many departments have Adobe Acrobat software and can perform the conversion process. The University Library also has professionals who can assist you with this process.

## Examples

The examples on the following pages are intended to illustrate some of the format elements discussed in this booklet. The style manual of the American Psychological Association was used for these examples; however the formatting principles illustrated apply in general to other academic manuscript styles. Students should consult the style manuals approved by their departments for specific elements of style.

The large numbers in the bottom corners are the page numbers referred to in this manual.

**5**

Annotations which are not part of the sample pages, but are added to help point out stylistic elements, are presented in a bold, sans serif font, while the thesis text is in 12 point Times New Roman.

**Note: Annotation**

Note that while the sample pages are printed on both sides of the paper for convenience, theses **MUST** be printed on only **ONE** side to facilitate microfilming or other preservation techniques which the University may undertake in the future.



AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS  
BETWEEN A VIEWER'S AGE AND HIS OR HER  
TELEVISION VIEWING PATTERNS

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A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of  
the Department of Media Studies  
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania  
Kutztown, Pennsylvania

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science

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by

Ralph G. Student

May, 2002

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Adviser)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chair, Department of Media Studies)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Dean, Graduate Studies)

**An abstract may not exceed 500 words unless departmental guidelines provide for an exception!**

## Abstract

In the 1960s and 1970s various studies emerged in the field of television viewing patterns. More recently Jaff (2000) found that age played a significant role in viewing selection, while Roberts (2001) found that people's preferences in what they want out of life are changing.

This thesis explored the relationship between age and television viewing patterns by means of a survey of 138 randomly selected subjects. Subjects were asked (a) how many hours of television they viewed on the average weekday, (b) their favorite TV program, (c) their favorite TV character, and (d) their age.

Analysis of the data yielded several significant relationships. Children between the ages of 0 and 18 demonstrated a high frequency of television viewing, while adults between the ages of 19 and 54 view television infrequently.

The 0 to 18 year-olds identify with fantasy characters, while the 19 to 55+ year-old category appeared to identify with real characters. Situation comedy was the most popular type of program for all age categories, with the exception of the 55+ age group. This group favored drama.

**The Acknowledgments section is frequently written in the first person and may employ a more informal style than the rest of the thesis.**

## Acknowledgments

I wish to express my appreciation to all those who have made this thesis possible. This includes the many people who served as subjects for the study, the professors who have encouraged and guided my research, and the University staff who have made it possible. Particularly, however, I would acknowledge my debt to the following persons:

To my Adviser, Dr. Patience Prof, who suggested the topic and has guided my work with patience, understanding, and skill.

To my wife, Harriet, who provided tremendous support throughout the project.

To fellow graduate students Francine Cantwell, David Heffley, Greg Heintzelman, Mary Ann Kusko, Theresa Manento, Donald McNally, Vincent Misiewicz, Antonina Mollica, Donald Murphy, Hoang Tang, and Wade Walton, who helped collect the data.

A graduate assistantship from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania made it financially possible for me to complete this research project.

## Table of Contents

	Page
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	v
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Problem Statement.....	1
Definition of Terms .....	1
Significance of the Study.....	3
Limitations of the Study .....	4
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	5
3. METHODOLOGY .....	33
The Sample .....	33
The Instrument.....	34
Procedures.....	36
4. FINDINGS .....	49
Age.....	49
Sex .....	54
5. DISCUSSION.....	65
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	88
APPENDIX A, Survey Sheet .....	89
APPENDIX B, Coding Sheet.....	91

## List of Tables and Figures

Table	Page
1. Viewing Frequency by Percent of Age Group .....	50
2. Program Preferences by Percent of Age Group .....	53
3. Favorite Character by Percent of Age Group .....	55

Figure	Page
1. Favorite character type by percent of age group .....	54
2. Program preferences by viewing frequency .....	56

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Top margin set at 1.25 inches (1 inch for electronic publication).  
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Chapter 1 ← **Each chapter starts on a new page, 2 lines down from the top margin.**  
Introduction

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Left margin is set at 1.5 inches to allow for binding (1.25 inches for electronic publication).  
→

As the United States' population ages, more research is being dedicated to the study of television viewing patterns within specific age demographics. Increasingly, members of the "Baby Boomer Generation" are being studied as targets for effective television advertising because of their increasing wealth, where previously most advertising had been aimed at a younger demographic (Jaff, 2000).

While some style manuals may specify footnotes, most now allow for citation of sources in the body of the text.

Age seems to be a great factor in determining viewing patterns (Robin, 1997). A review of current literature shows that a number of television studies use age as an independent variable in determining viewing habits (e.g. Hefz, 1997; Roberts, 2001).

Whatever style is used, however, it is imperative that ALL material obtained from outside sources be cited!

*Problem Statement*

↑  
3 lines are inserted above major subheadings.  
↓

What is the relationship between a viewer's age and his or her viewing patterns?

*Definition of Terms*

1. viewing patterns- the frequency of viewing television expressed in hours per day, the category of the respondent's favorite program (news, sitcom, etc.), and the status of the respondent's favorite character (real or fantasy).
2. television- regular series or specials carried on broadcast or cable television.

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Right margin is set at 1.25 inches (1 inch for electronic pub.) and is not usually justified.

↑  
Bottom margin is set at 1.25 inches (1 inch for electronic publication).  
↓  
Page 1 is not usually numbered.

The most notable finding, as shown in Table 2, was the high degree of preference shown for sitcoms by all age groups except the 55+ group, which preferred drama.

Table 2

*Program Preferences by Percent of Age Group*

Program Preference	Age Group				
	0-12	13-18	19-24	25-54	55+
Child Educational	3	0	0	0	0
Child Entertainment	29	16	0	0	0
Drama	10	16	39	24	43
Game Show	3	0	0	5	14
Music/Variety	0	3	0	11	0
News/Pub. Affairs	0	3	10	8	0
Sitcom	55	53	45	38	14
Soap Opera	0	6	7	11	14
Sports	0	3	0	3	14

**Tables should present data clearly so that little textual explanation is required.**

**They should be placed as closely as possible to the related text and may not exceed text margins.**

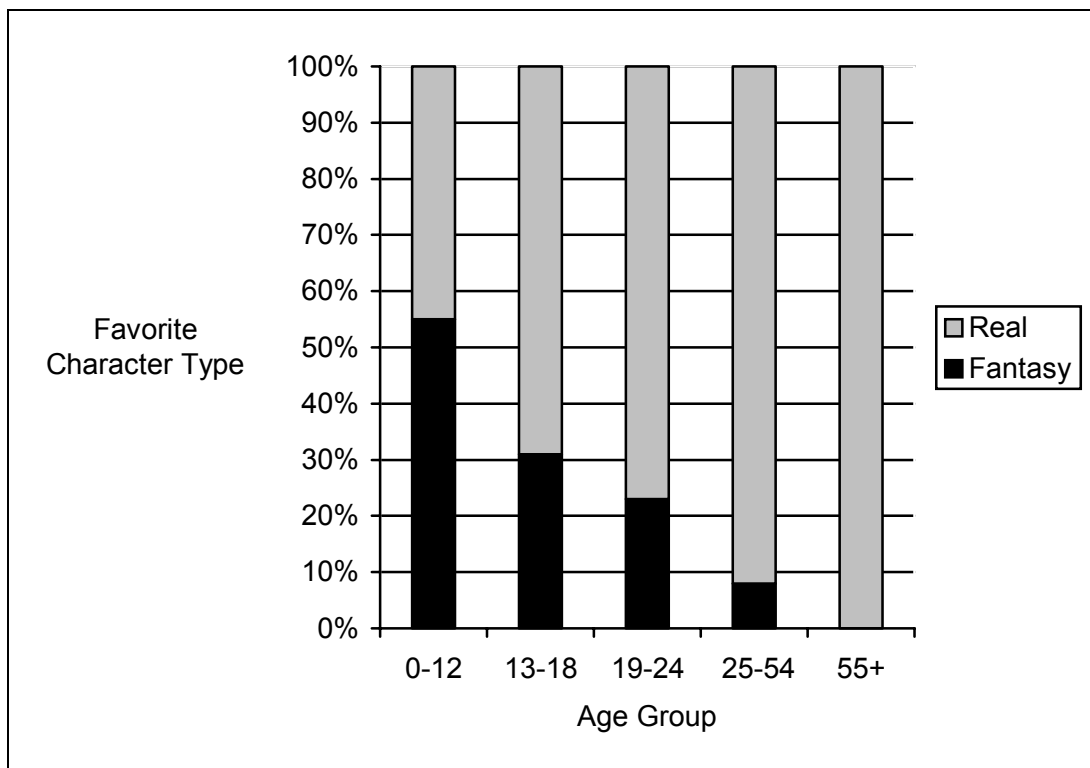
The strongest relationship found was between favorite character type (real or fantasy) and the viewer's age group,  $\chi^2(4, N=138) = 22.17, p = .00$ . As can be seen in Figure 1, preference for fantasy characters drops rapidly after the age of 12.



Figure 1. Favorite character type by percent of age group.

When using charts and graphs, care should be taken to select the most effective style to present the data visually.

Keep them simple, 2-D, and make sure there is enough contrast between elements to ensure that they will reproduce well.



### Sex

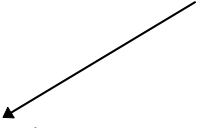
Males were found on average to view .53 more hours of television per day than females (2.89 compared with 2.36) and this relationship approaches significance,  $t(136) = 1.57, p = .06$ . The standard deviation is also greater for males, 2.29 compared with 1.65 for females.

No significant relationship was found between the viewer's sex and the sex of his/her favorite character or the type of program preferred.

Entries for works cited are frequently single spaced.

Refer to the appropriate style manual for details of citing various types of source material.

MLA style will call this section "Works Cited" and the format will differ from the APA examples shown in a number of respects.



Bibliography

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Robin, A. M. (1997, Fall). Television usage, attitudes and viewing behaviors of children and adolescents. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 41 (4), 355-369.

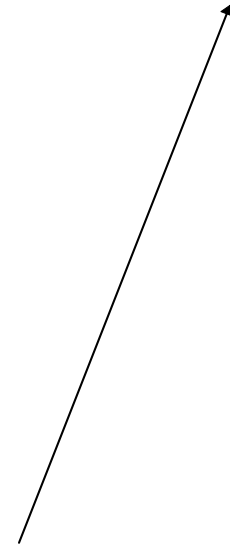
Smith, J. & Brown, L. (1999, April). *Television viewing and child development*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Broadcast Education Association, Las Vegas, NV.

Walters, J. (1993). The evolution of viewing demographics for major market television news. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 54 (01), 534B. (UMI No. 9315947)

Zufer, A. (Writer), & Malloy, J. (Director). (2000). Fade out: the declining audience for network programming [Television series episode]. In J. Cook (Producer), *Frontline*. Washington, DC: PBS.

Appendix A

Survey Sheet



**Each appendix must have a title page which must be numbered. While it is desirable to place thesis page numbers on each page of the appendices, if this will cause confusion with the appendix page numbers, the thesis page numbers may be omitted.**

**Note that each page of the appendices is counted in the thesis numbering sequence, whether or not a thesis page number is actually printed.**