

The MA Thesis consists of the following structure:

- * a title page (*see the Graduate School Handbook for format instructions*).
- * An abstract (of no more than 200 words), that...
 1. provides a simple descriptive statement of the conditions exhibited by the research's topic;
 2. makes a simple declarative statement about the importance of the research's topic;
 3. presents a short portrayal of the theoretical perspective used in the research;
 4. states the hypothetical geographical relations that are implied by the theoretical perspective;
 5. outlines, in simple statements, just what the research does in each section;
 - a) including specific statements identifying the methodology employed in each step of the research
 6. states the results in a straightforward & complete manner.
- * a table of contents page (*see the Graduate School Handbook for format instructions*).
- * A table of figures/maps page (*see the Graduate School Handbook for format instructions and details*).

note that the thesis is written in accepted academic style. This means that first-person form ("I collected data from...") is not allowed; that the active voice is employed ("This research tests for the association between...."); and that future tense is unacceptable ("This research will test for..."), after all, by the time someone reads the thesis it is completed/finished -- it has already done what it set out to do. See the Graduate School Handbook for format instructions about font, spacing, page numbering, appendices, etc.

1. Chapter 1, the introduction chapter contains...

- a. A section that introduces the project paper. This involves...
 - i. telling the reader exactly what the paper does.
 - ii. telling the reader what the area of study is.
 - iii. giving a brief summary of findings reported in the paper.
 - iv. telling the reader what he/she can expect to read in the following sections of chapter 1.
- b. A section that completely describes the process that is being studied. This includes/involves...
 - i. telling the reader why this process is an important topic for study, often using descriptive statistics to portray this importance.
 - ii. identifying and defining the/all elements/components/features in/of the process.
 - iii. describing, step-by-step, how the process works: that is, describing how the elements/components interact to produce some result.
 - iv. describing the result in terms of the spatial pattern/phenomena that can be seen/measured.
 - v. identifying & describing any agency/individual/program that has as an objective the regulation or monitoring or modification or influence of/on this process.
- c. A section that completely describes the study area. This includes/involves...
 - i. identifying the location of the study area at the regional and local scales
 - ii. providing maps of the region and local area that clearly show the study area.
 - iii. describing, in great detail, the history and geography, both physical & human, of the study area.
 - iv. providing additional maps of historical & geographical changes in/to the area if those changes are the topic of study.
- d. A section that notes any important assumptions made by/in the study and describes how those assumptions might influence the results of the study.

- e. A section that provides a short summary of the sections above, and provides a brief description of what the following chapters of the document do.

2. Chapter 2, the literature review, includes...

- a. A section that briefly describes the manner in which chapter 2 is organized (first reviewing theoretical literature on the process under study, then reviewing empirical literature on the process under study).
- b. A section that...
 - i. provides a general overview and categorization of the theoretical (philosophical and conceptual) foundations of the prior research.
 - ii. identifies and describes each theoretical stream in the literature, naming the author/founder and summarizing the author's theorized elements/components & relationships in the process.
- c. A section that identifies and summarizes the empirical literature that investigates the process under study. This involves...
 - i. identifying the author(s)
 - ii. describing, briefly, exactly what they did and how they did it (what methods applied to what data for what study area).
 - iii. relaying the findings reported by the author(s), and noting any problems/suggestions/ideas the authors mention as important for future research(ers).
- d. A section that summarizes the literature reviewed in terms of the concordance between it and the study undertaken for this thesis paper.

3. Chapter 3, the methodology chapter, includes...

- a. An introduction that restates what the study does and how it does it.
- b. A section that...
 - i. identifies and describes the **statistical** operations employed in the analysis. This involves...
 - 1. naming the statistical procedure, and defining any 'jargon' that is required to understand the procedure;
 - 2. describing what it does;
 - 3. describing how it does what it does;
 - 4. noting any assumptions about data (data requirements) of the statistical operations;
 - 5. specifying what (numerical) results the procedure yields;
 - 6. explaining how those (numerical) results are interpreted.
- c. A section that...
 - i. identifies and describes the **GIS** operations employed in the analysis (*if any*). This involves...
 - 1. naming the GIS procedure, and defining any 'jargon' that is required to understand the procedure;
 - 2. identifying and defining the necessary elements/components in/of the procedure;
 - 3. describing what it does;
 - 4. describing how it does what it does;
 - 5. specifying what (map) results the procedure yields;
 - 6. explaining what those (map) results portray.
- d. A section that...
 - i. identifies, defines and describes the data used in the study.
 - ii. describes in detail how data is collected. This involves...
 - 1. detailed descriptions of...
 - a. the measuring devices used,

- b. the manner of collecting items/samples for measuring,
 - c. the locations (provide a map) at/from which things are measured/collected,
 - d. the data entry process and the computer/notebook mode of data recording.
- e. and/or it involves...
- 1. detailed descriptions that
 - a. identify the source(s) that/who/which provides the data,
 - b. specify the format in which data is provided,
 - c. depict the mode of data entry/storage.
- f. A summary section that tells how these methods produce a more complete understanding of the process under study (in general or in terms of its importance to the study area).

4. Chapter 4, the results chapter, includes...

- a. An introduction that...
 - i. briefly restates what the study does and how it does it.
 - ii. briefly reports/summarizes the results of the analysis.
 - iii. tells the reader what he/she to expect in the following sections of the chapter.
- b. A section that provides a complete and step-by-step listing of (in tables and/or maps), and commenting on and interpretation of, the statistical/numerical/procedural results. This involves...
 - i. describing and explaining the results in terms of their statistical/methodological/numerical meaning.
 - ii. describing and explaining the results in terms of their ("real-world") meaning to the study area.
 - iii. describing in detail the geographical expression of these results in the study area.
- c. A summary section that briefly notes how these findings portray the importance of the process under study (again, in general terms or in terms of the area under study).

5. Chapter 5, the conclusions chapter, includes...

- a. An introduction section that...
 - i. restates what the study did, how it did it using what study area, and notes the results it produced.
 - ii. tells the reader that/how the following sections of chapter 5...
 - 1. briefly review earlier chapters,
 - 2. note important realizations (about doing research on this topic) made by the researcher during the study,
 - 3. provide suggestions for future research(ers).
- b. A section that summarizes each of the preceding chapters. This involves...
 - i. summarizing the contents and meanings of chapter 1,
 - ii. restating the general theoretical framework in which chapter 2 places the process under study,
 - iii. summarizing especially important empirical research reviewed in chapter 2,
 - iv. briefly describing the methodology employed in the analysis,
 - v. briefly summarizing the findings reported in chapter 4.
- c. A section that notes important 'discoveries' about doing research (in general and/or in terms of doing research on the process under study and/or in terms of doing research about/on this study area).
- d. A section that defines some future research questions (about the process under study and/or the study area), and suggests solutions to them, brought to the researcher's attention by the analysis.

