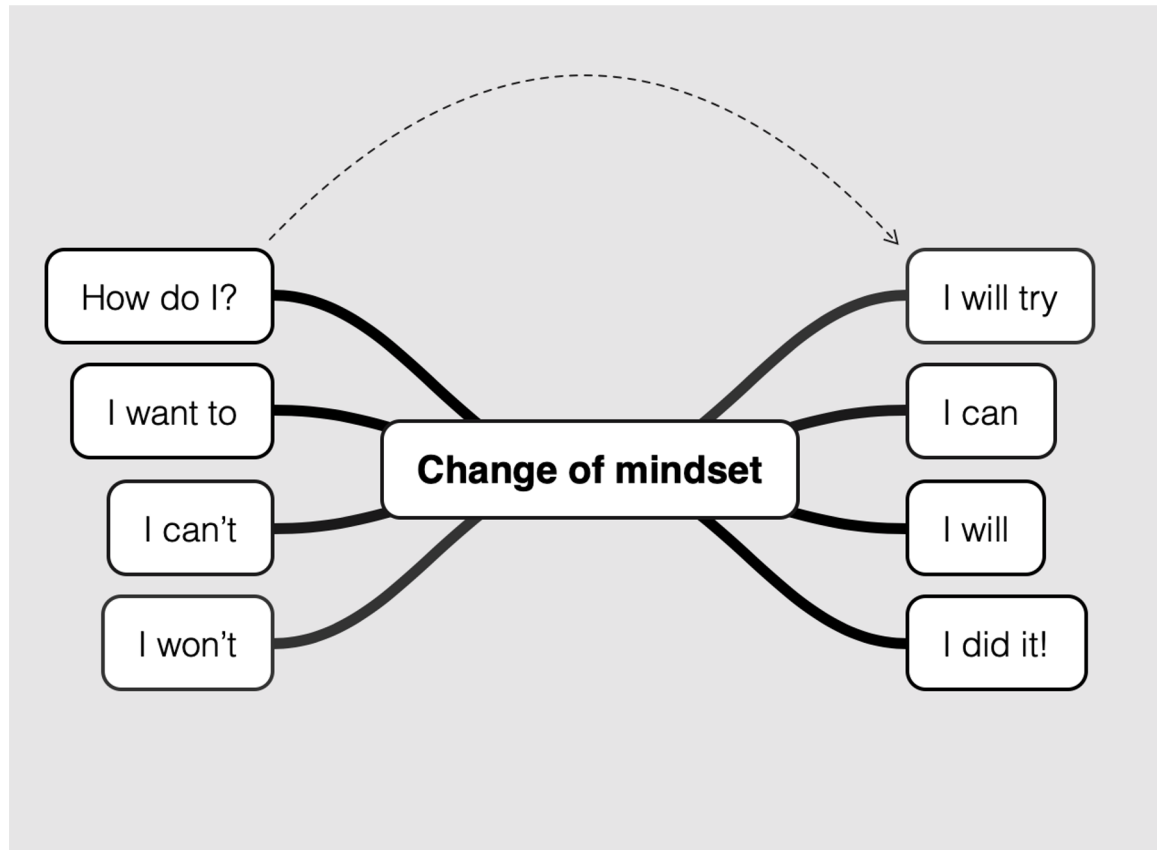

Getting your thesis done without going bonkers



From **unconscious incompetence** to **conscious incompetence** to **conscious competence** to **unconscious competence**

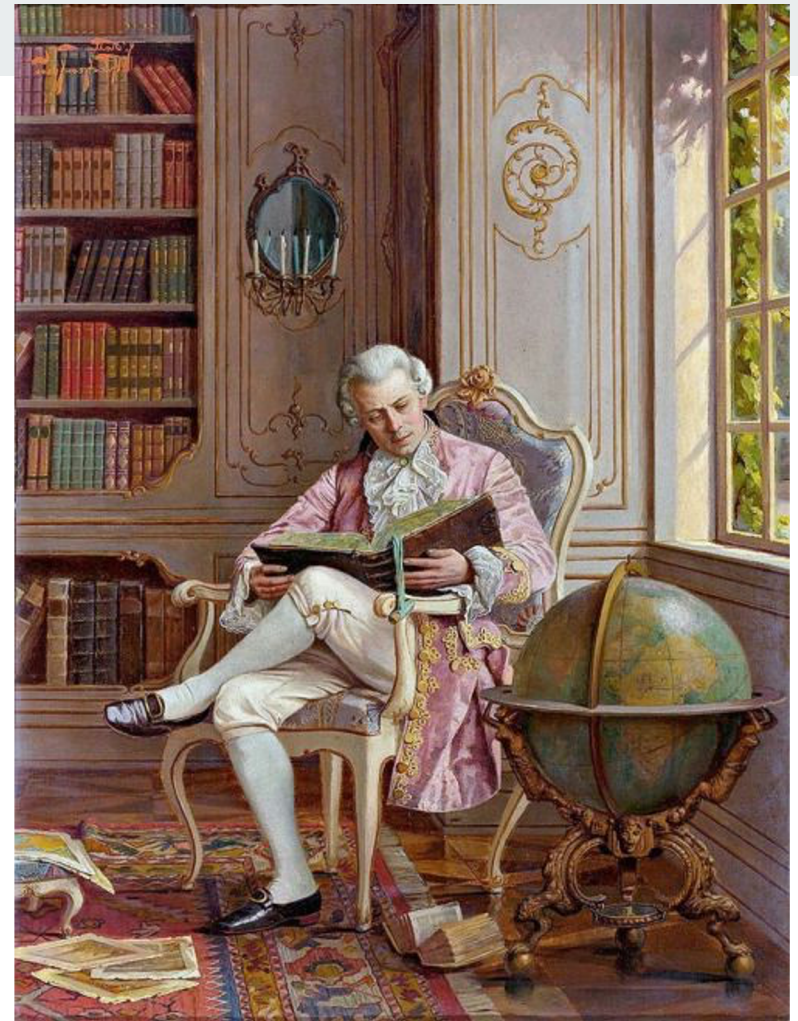
You are not alone.



Supervisors and advisors

You are entitled to get support from “supervisor” (*valvoja*) and one or two “advisors” (*ohjaaja*).

Supervisor can act as an advisor, taking care of both roles.





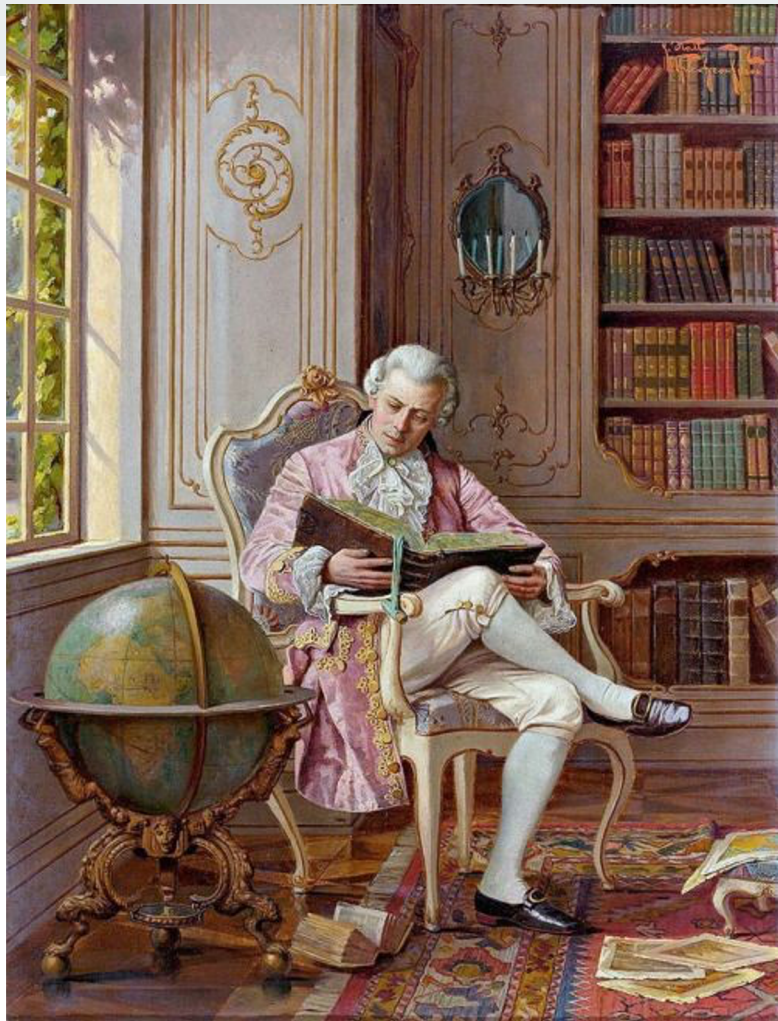
Supervisor

- Has to be faculty of the programme and is appointed by the programme.
- Approves or decides thesis topic, thesis plan, advisor(s), thesis parts 1 and 2
- Grants permission to submit the thesis and extensions + re-approvals of topic
- Ensures academic quality including language of the thesis and that there's sufficient advising
- Approves or decides arrangements when thesis is done as a teamwork.
- Evaluates maturity test
- May act as the second examiner for the thesis.



Advisor

- You can have informal talks with people whom you'd like to work with. You can also propose advisors in your thesis plan.
- Must be expert in the field of study / topic of thesis.
- When there are two advisors, typically one focuses on project and another on writing.
- Approves that the completed thesis can be submitted to the supervisor, to begin examination.
- Is responsible for guidance for one year from the date topic is approved.
- Can act as the second examiner.
- Proposes to supervisor the approval of parts 1 and 2.
- Cannot take part in grading the thesis.
- External advisors are paid 10 h fee. Faculty advisors are not paid, and advice for “reasonable amount” of hours.



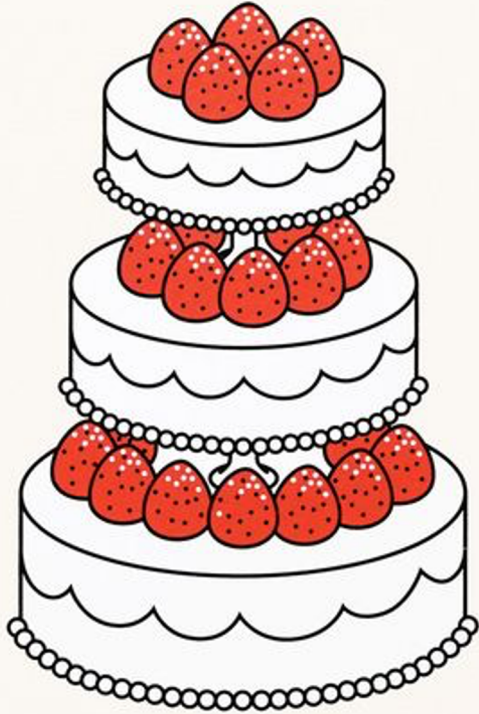
Working with advisor

- Come prepared.
- Do what you have promised.
- But do not promise too far to the future. Focus on the ongoing phase.
- Don't hesitate to ask advice (3 day rule!)

You have time to make your plans.



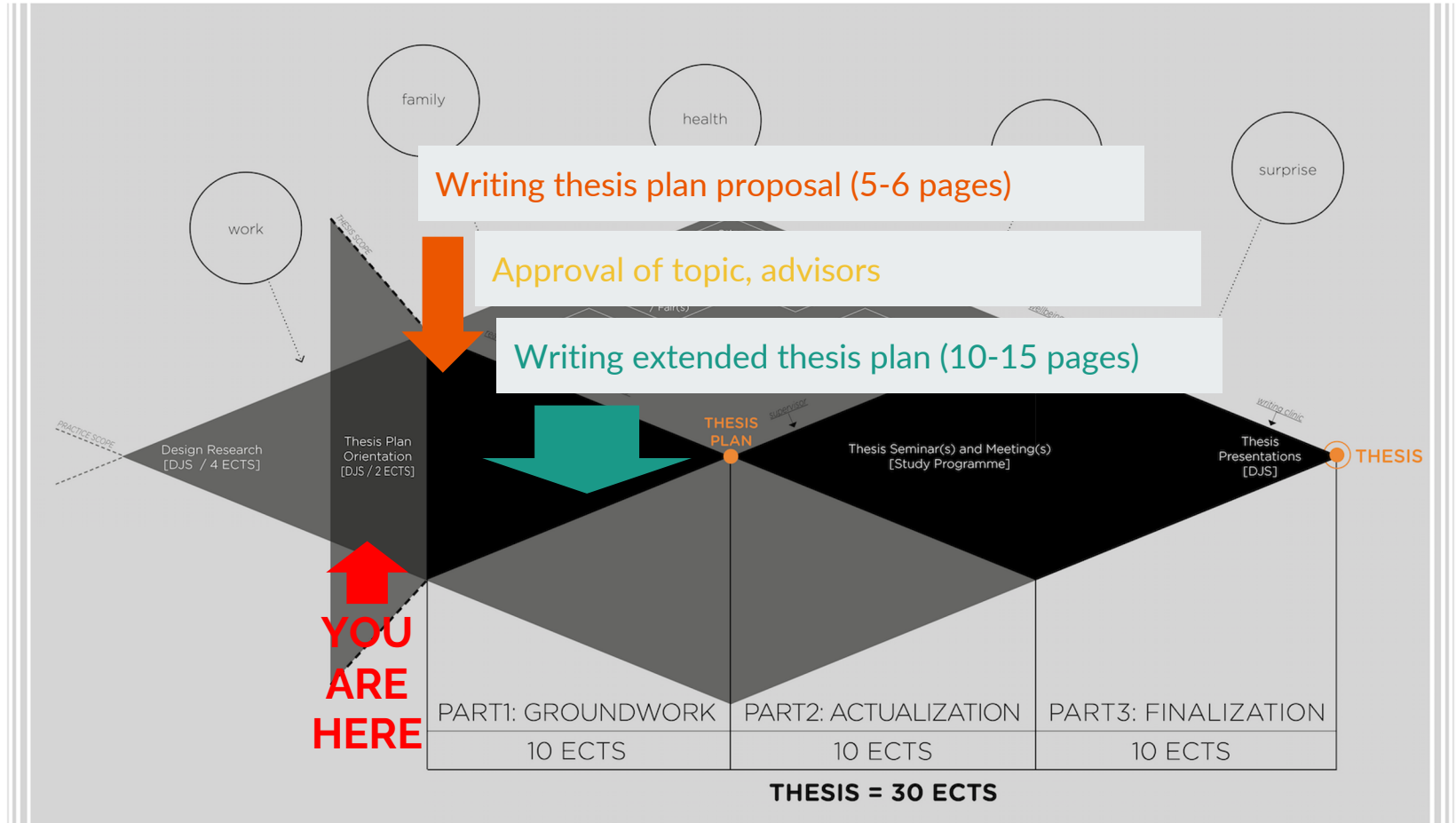
best wishes

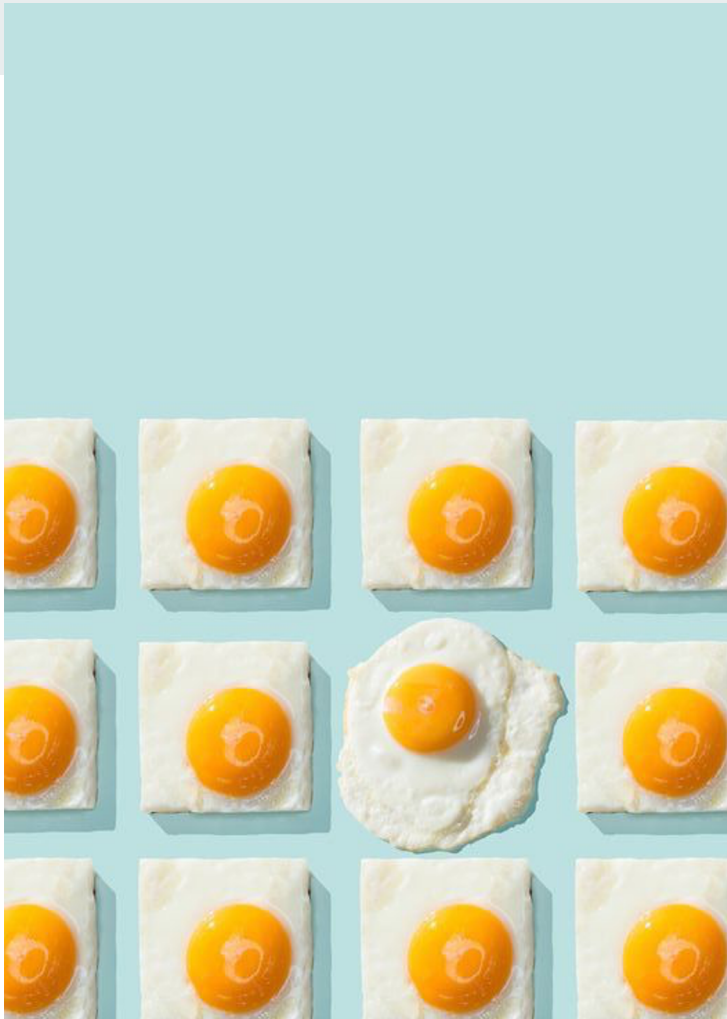


**“Well planned is
1/3 done!”**

Thesis is done in three phases or parts.
Each part is 10 credits.

The first part is framing and planning the thesis. This should be taken seriously. You can use up to 10 credits of your time and energy to build a solid ground to your thesis process.



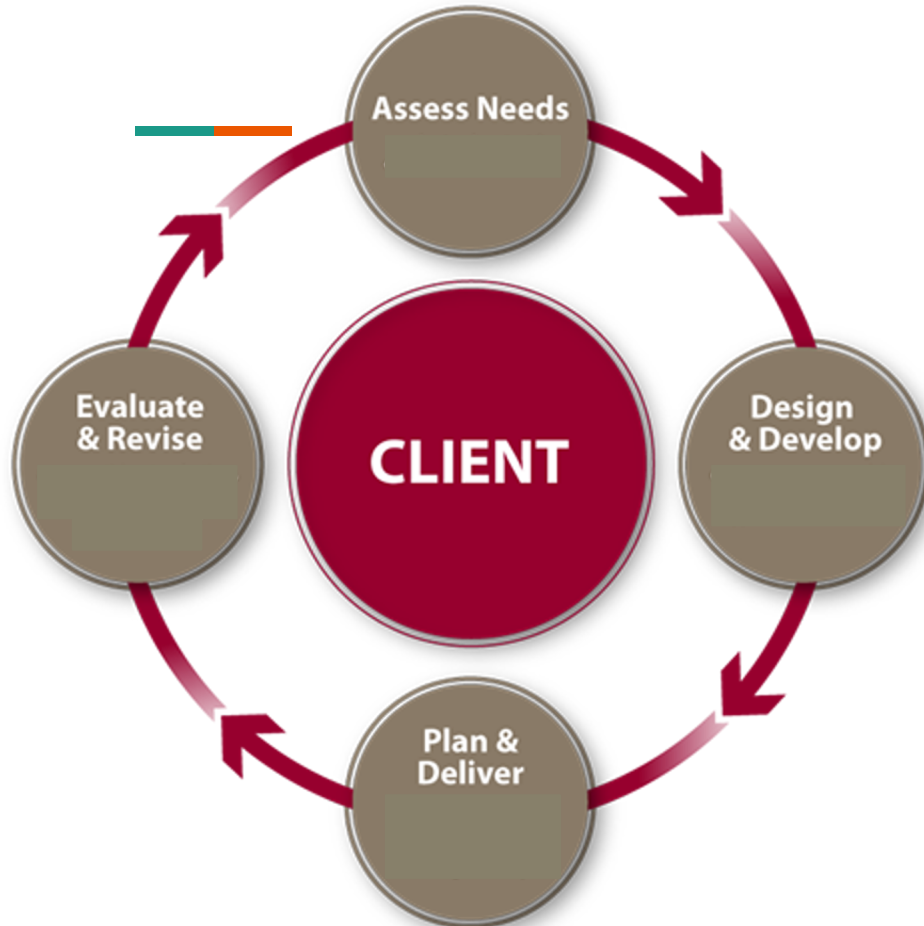


If there's no time to be perfect?

Thesis does not need to be excellent (5).
Thesis does not even be good (3). You graduate with satisfactory thesis (1).

If you're in a hurry, dedicating time to the planning phase helps you to estimate which parts of the thesis are most important and which parts you can do with less effort.

What kind of task is MA thesis?



Thesis is designed

You can think **Thesis as a design task**, a design project on commission.

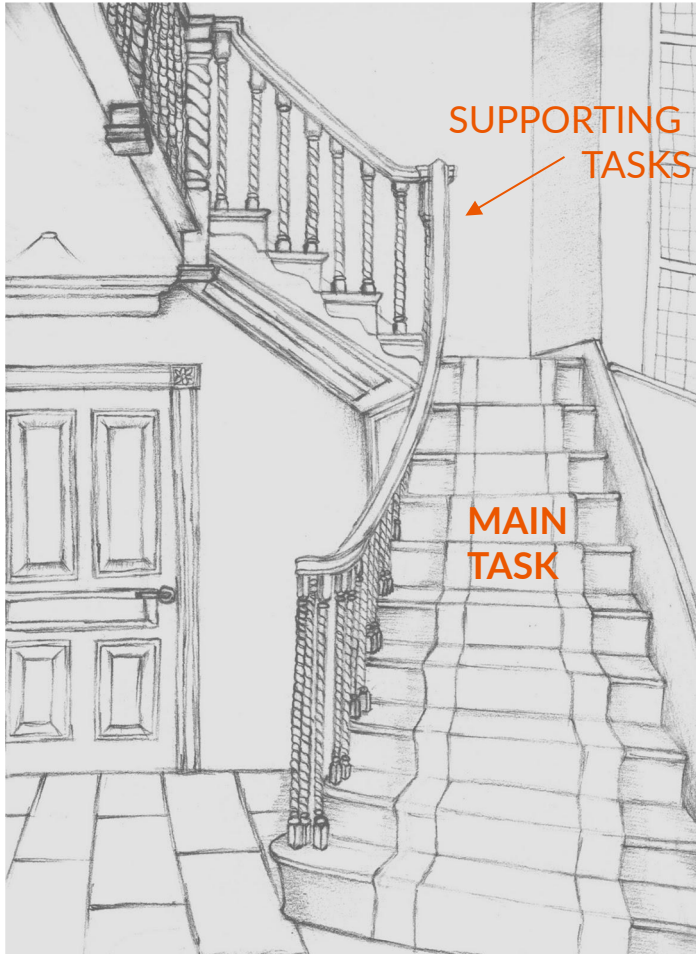
In this project, your client is the academic institution of Aalto University. The client gives you some requirements but also guidelines and support.

Thesis is written

You can think **Thesis as a writing project**.

In this project, your reader and audience is the academic institution of Aalto University. The university gives you some requirements but also guidelines and support.





“The stairs” metaphor

It helps to think thesis as one kind of task (“the stairs”), which is supported with some other kinds of tasks (“the handrails”).

Most helpful is to think **Thesis as a writing task** (main task), supported with reading and research (**supporting tasks**) only as much as is needed for you **to write**.

"I wanted to
explode the shapes
and proportions,
to take myself
out of my comfort
zone," says
Sarah Burton
of Alexander
McQueen



**FORCE OF
NATURE**

Parading down
Alexander McQueen's
fall runway were a
flurry of petal dresses,
including this six-
tiered dahlia-like look
made from pleated
organza. Alexander
McQueen dress and
mirrored visor. In this
story: hair, Guido for
Redken; makeup,
Diane Kendal. Details,
see in This Issue.

From interest to topic

Coming up with something to write about is typically a layered process. You start with something really big or vague and then narrow it by adding more and more specific limitations to the topic.

Photo: Model Kati Nescher featured in The New Normal, July 2012, Vogue. Stylist Grace Coddington, Photographer David Sims. Fashion design Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen

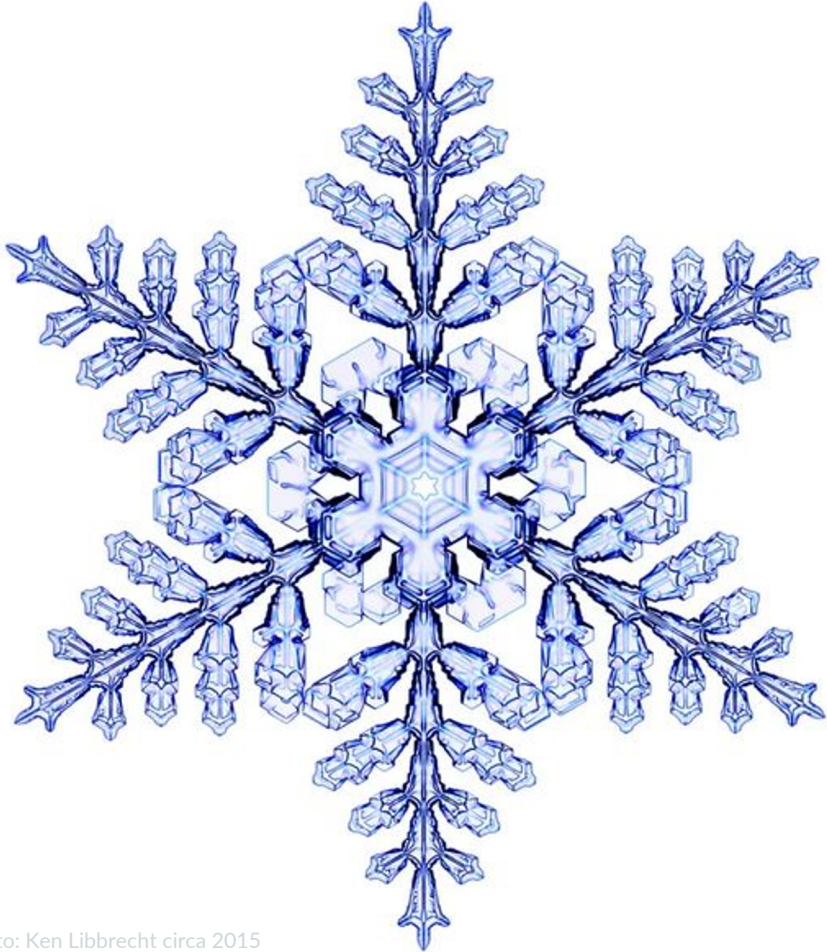
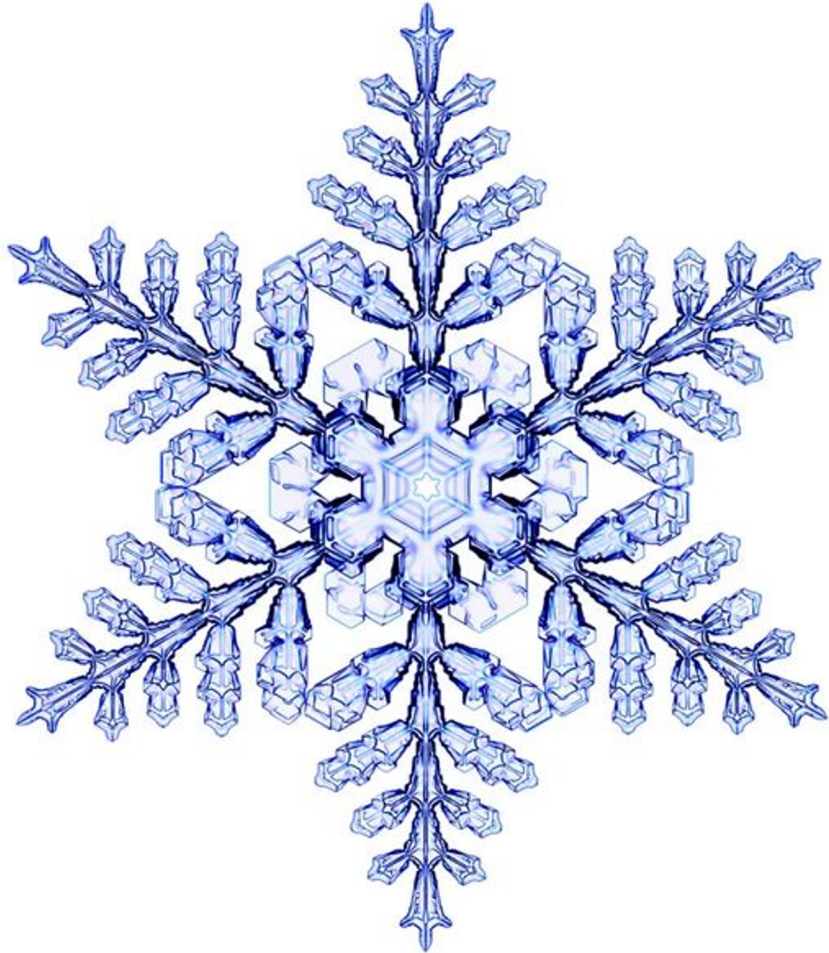


Photo: Ken Libbrecht circa 2015

Snow flake writing

1. **One sentence.** What's the main idea?
2. **Five sentences.** What is it about?
3. **One page.** What is it about in more detail?
4. **Five pages.** What is it about in even more detail?



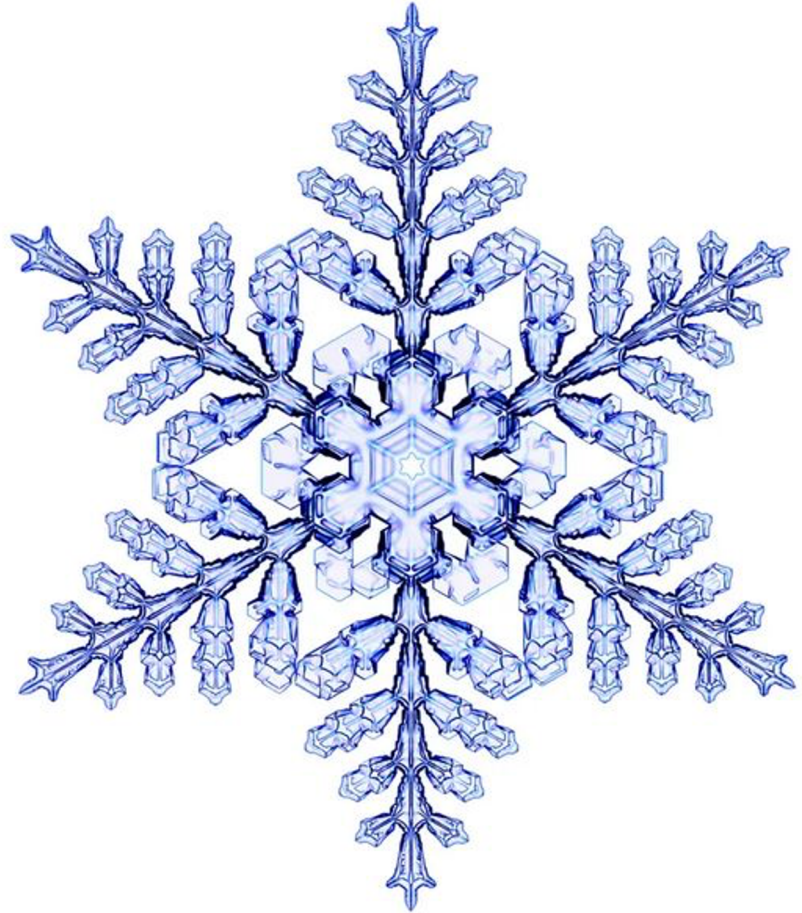
Step 1. Main idea

Use at least 1-2 days to formulate the main idea of your thesis in one sentence.

Result of this first step can be in a form of a question or a statement or a hypothesis.

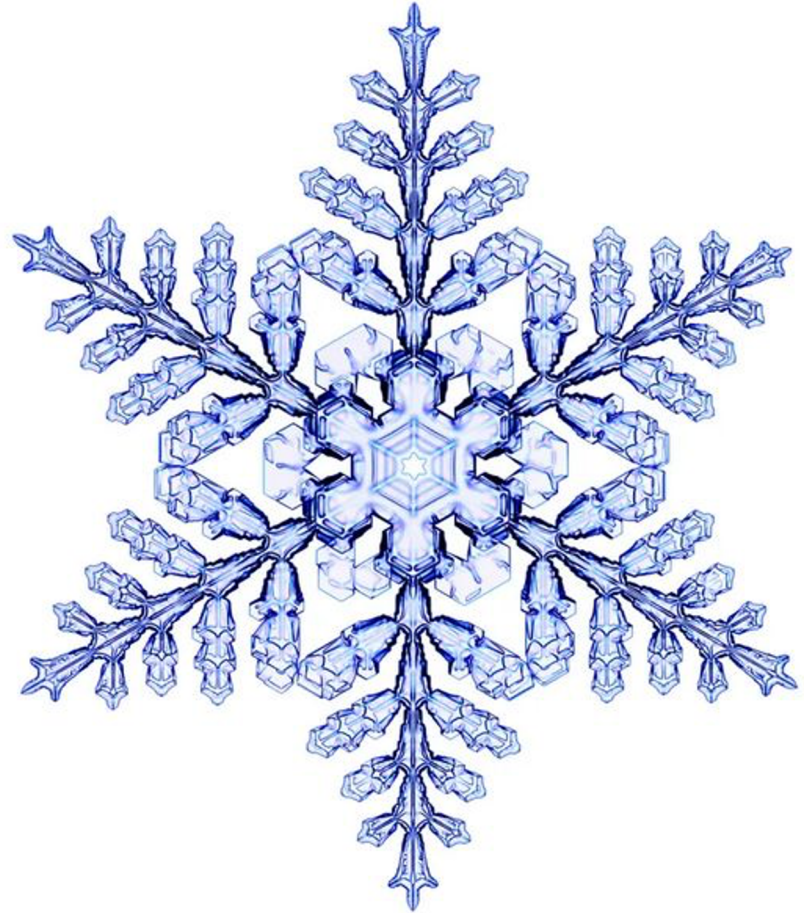
Step 2. Five sentences

1. What is the main question or statement?
2. Why this is important or interesting?
3. How is this going to be studied?
4. What could the results be like?
5. What else there is to this topic?



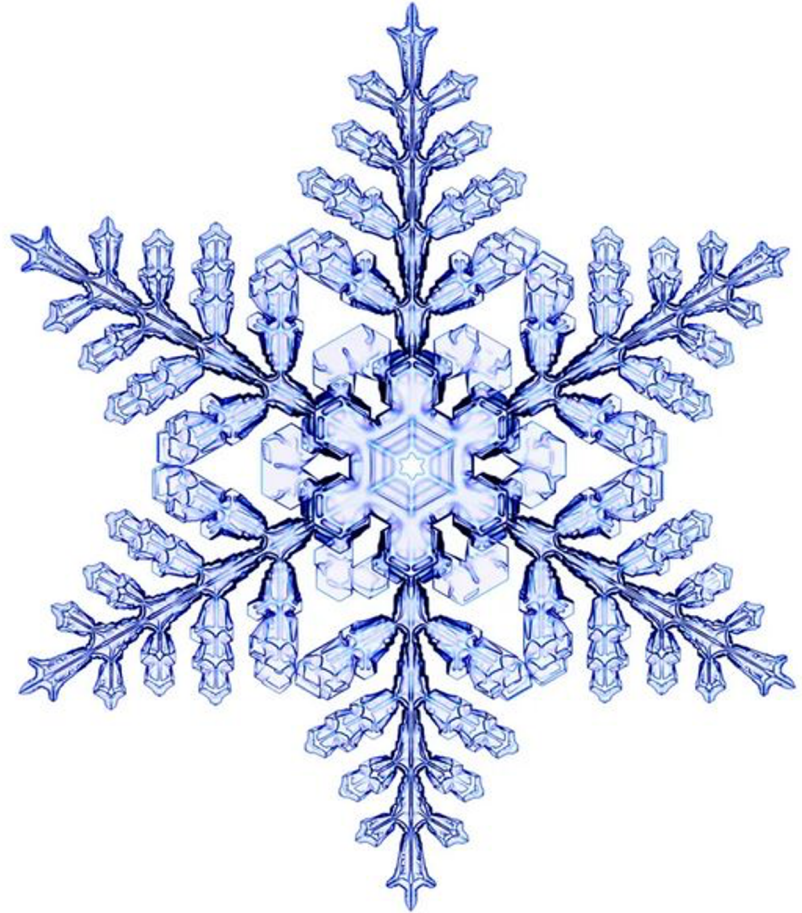
Step 3. One page

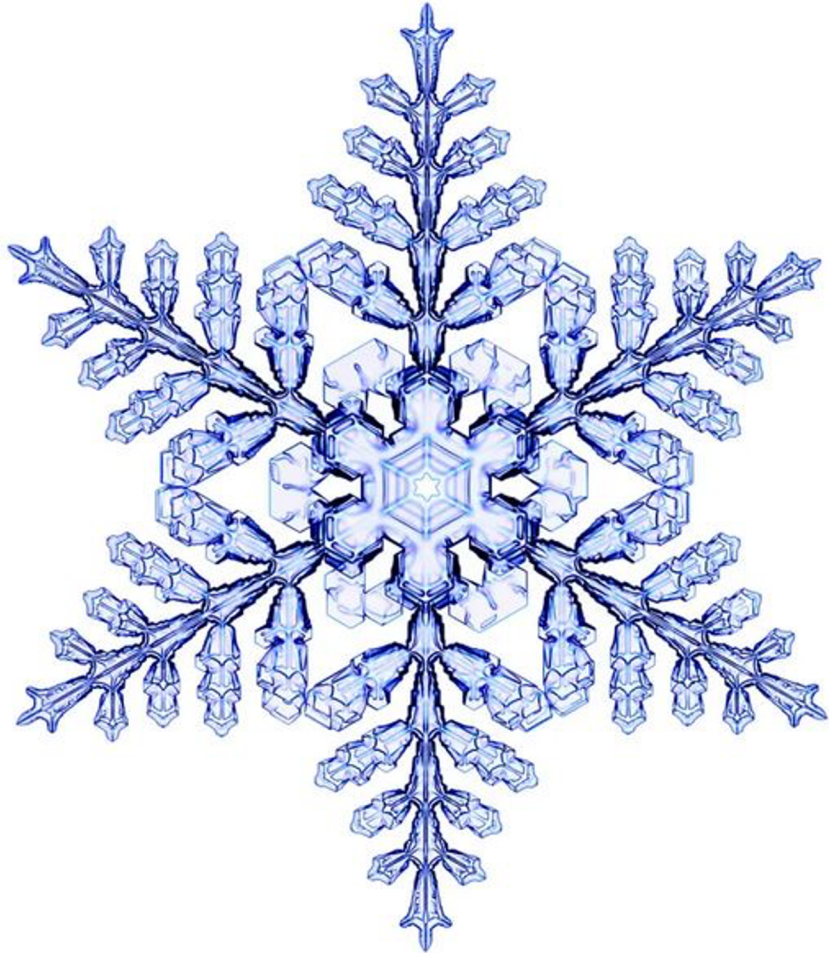
In this step those five sentences are expanded towards one page of text.



Step 4. Five pages

Next step is to write one page for each of the five questions. This is again about expanding the text you have written in the previous steps of this writing method.





Steps 5-12

5. Edit and rewrite texts of steps 1-3
6. Edit and rewrite text of step 4
7. Based on texts, outline table of contents
8. First (shitty) draft of thesis manuscript
9. Organise and edit text into chapters
10. Get feedback for the text
11. Edit and rewrite based on feedback
12. Proofreading



'Like all the best advice, this is clear, practical and utterly to the point. Unlocks the big secret: how to get your enthusiasm and inspiration into the required shape.' *John Armstrong*



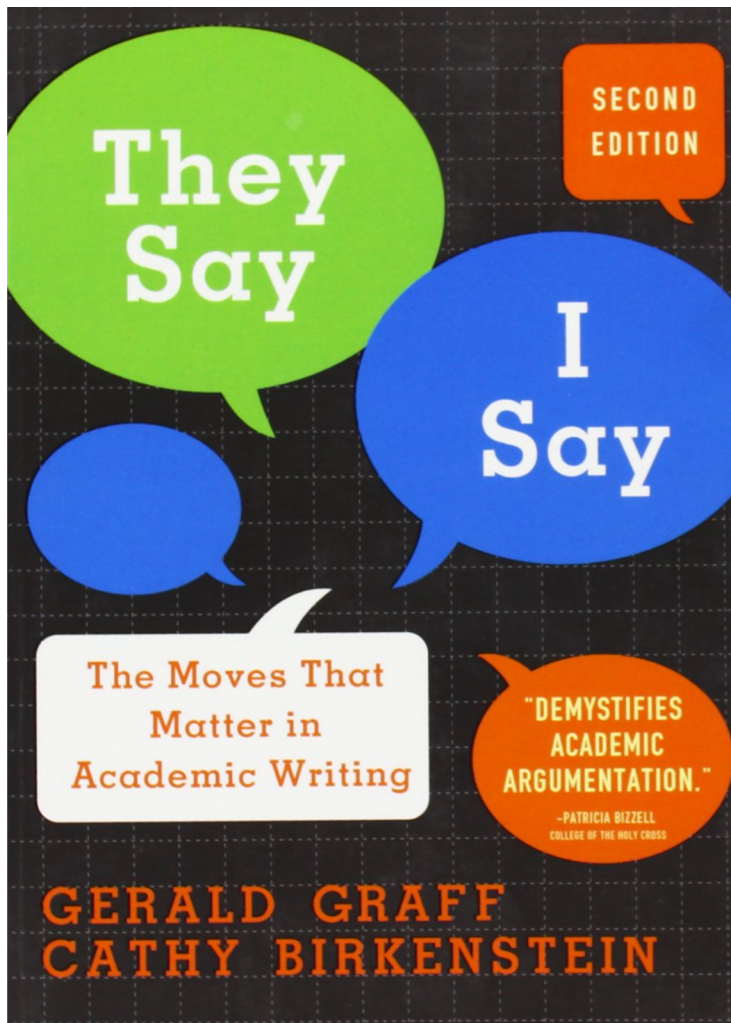
How to Write a Better **Minor** Thesis



Paul Gruba
Justin Zobel



From the bestselling authors of *How to Write a Better Thesis*



They Say, I Say Templates for Agreeing and Disagreeing

From *They Say, I Say* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein

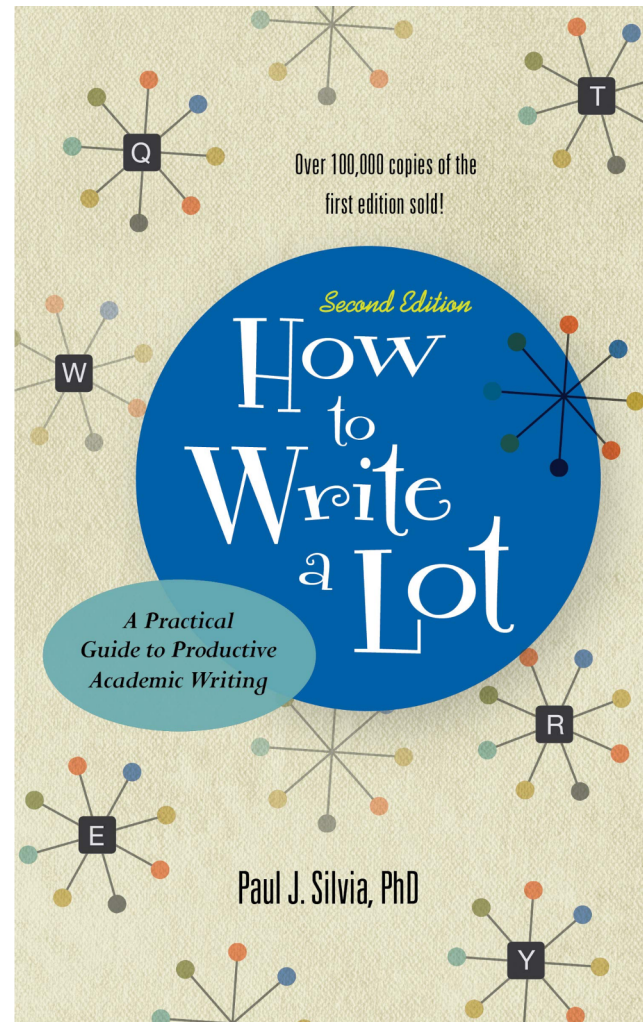
<p style="text-align: center;">They Say</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><small>(Use quotation marks if you copy the wording; always use the author's name!!!)</small></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">I Say</p>
<p>Signaling these are someone else's views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X offered a harsh critique of _____ for _____. • Many people assumed that _____. • X acknowledges that _____. • X argues that _____. • X believes that _____. • X denies/does not deny that _____. • X claims that _____. • X complains that _____. • X concedes that _____. • X emphasizes that _____. • X insists that _____. • X observes that _____. • X questions whether _____. • X refutes the claim that _____. • X reminds us that _____. • X reports that _____. • X suggests that _____. • X urges us to _____. • According to X, "_____." • In X's view, "_____." <p>Typing in another They Say</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X agrees, saying, "_____." • X disagrees when he writes, "_____." • X agrees that _____. • X complicates matters further when he writes, "_____." 	<p>Explaining Quotations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basically, X is saying _____. • In other words, X believes _____. • In making this comment, X argues that _____. • X is insisting that _____. • X's point is that _____. <p>Agreeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • X is right that... • I agree because... • I completely agree with X because... <p>Disagreeing, With Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think X is mistaken because she overlooks _____. • X's claim that _____ rests upon the questionable assumption that _____. • I disagree with X's view that _____ because... • X contradicts herself/can't have it both ways. On one hand she argues _____. • But on the other hand, she also says _____. • By focusing on _____, X overlooks the deeper problem of _____. • My own view, however, is that... • However, it is simply not true that... <p>Agreeing and Disagreeing Simultaneously</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although I agree with X up to a point, I cannot accept his overall conclusion that _____. • Although I disagree with much that X says, I fully endorse his final conclusion that _____. • Though I agree that _____, I still insist that _____.

HOWARD S. BECKER

Writing for Social Scientists

How to Start and Finish
Your Thesis, Book, or Article

SECOND EDITION



For you in “Materials” / MyCourses

2. BASICS: GUIDES, FORMS AND DATES

Thesis guide (English), Opinnäyteohje (Finnish) is the bible which covers all the basic requirements of the thesis. Read it, reflect upon it and do as is instructed.

Thesis plan explained. This is a video lecture by Turkka Keinonen.

Thesis plan template. This structure for thesis plan is a suggestion and it can be adopted according to the thesis. In case your supervisor provides you with research plan instructions different from the following, act according to the instructions of your supervisor, and, of course, MA Thesis Guide.

Contract template for thesis in/with a company. Should you plan to do thesis for a company, here's a helpful contract template. Remember that it is not only you who promises a thesis to the company but that also the company needs to promise support to you.

Copyright and personal data explained. This is a video lecture by Mari Pesola. Here are the [slides](#) of the talk.

Information retrieval explained. This is a video lecture by Marika Sarvilahti. Here are the [slides](#) of the talk.

Thesis submission and presentation timetable can be found in Design Joint Studies website.

Key dates of graduation (request for degree certificate & graduation ceremony). This info can be found in your MA programme's [Intro-site > Graduation](#).

Research ethics by the Finnish National Board of Research Integrity (TENK)

For you in “Materials” / MyCourses

Lyhyt opas viittaamiseen (in Finnish) explains in an economic manner why, when and how to write correct references in an academic text.

In English helpful is **instructions to Harvard referencing** because (Author, date) format is commonly used in the Department. Remember, though, that ARTS or Aalto does not have recommended referencing system so you can use whatever system you feel is most appropriate. Key principle is simple: your text must be as easy as possible to read and evaluate. Use your user centred thinking-skills to achieve that. In general, academic readers tend to prefer seeing sources in the text while commercial writers typically have endnotes.

Useful website for referencing: <https://www.citethisforme.com>

(PDF) *How to read a book, v5.0* by Paul N. **Edwards**, University of Michigan School of Information

(PDF) **Newport, C.** (2007). *How to become a straight-A student. Chapter about how to write college level 30-50 pages research paper.* New York: Broadway Books. Even though this is not specifically about writing the thesis, the example of "Mindy's Art History Research Paper" fits very well with how to construct and write an excellent thesis.

(PDF) **Webster, J., & Watson, R. T.** (2002). Analyzing the past to prepare for the future. Writing a literature review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2), xiii-xxiii. This is an informative and comforting article written by the editors of MIS Quarterly to help their contributors to write good quality literature reviews.

(PDF) Ladik, D. M., & Stewart, D. W. (2008). The contribution continuum. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 36(2), 157-165. This article is about how to write your thesis contribution.

Couple of handbooks that are useful if writing does not come easily:

Becker, H. S. (1986). *Writing for social scientists. How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2007). *"They say/I say". The moves that matter in persuasive writing.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.
Ilyin, N. (2019). *Writing for the design mind.* London: Bloomsbury.



1/5 ALWAYS beats 24/7

- Patience (do not work for too long time) and consistency (work 5 days a week) is most efficient and healthy way of writing (Boice, 1994).
- Experts can do full days of focused work, because they have expertise with which to go deep, but not even the professionals write more than a few hours a day (Newport, 2016; King, 2000) .
- If you know the academic routines and conventions, acceptable thesis can be done in two weeks or in a weekend. In that case the main learning objective (how to run a successful project independently in a sustainable manner) is not met. (Rehn, 2006)

Boice, Robert. 1994. *How writers journey to comfort and fluency. A psychological adventure*. Westport: Praeger.

King, Stephen. 2000. *On writing. A memoir of the craft*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Newport, Cal. 2016. *Deep work. Rules for focused success in a distracted world*. London: Piatkus.

Rehn, Alf. 2006. *The Scholar's progress. Essays on academic life and survival*. New York: iUniverse.

Academic reading

Your task is *not* to write summaries of literature. Your task is to communicate *your* argument.

Learn to read by skimming, like a really busy journalist. Just glance through everything that's not relevant.

Read carefully just those parts that are relevant to your argument. Write notes of only the important parts. **Always record full references, including page numbers.**



Poster design: Nasa

Three kinds of days

There should be three kinds of days in a thesis plan writer's working week:

- Days of content development (2-4)
- Days of preparation (2-3)
- Days off (1-2)



Photo by [Estée Janssens](#) on [Unsplash](#)

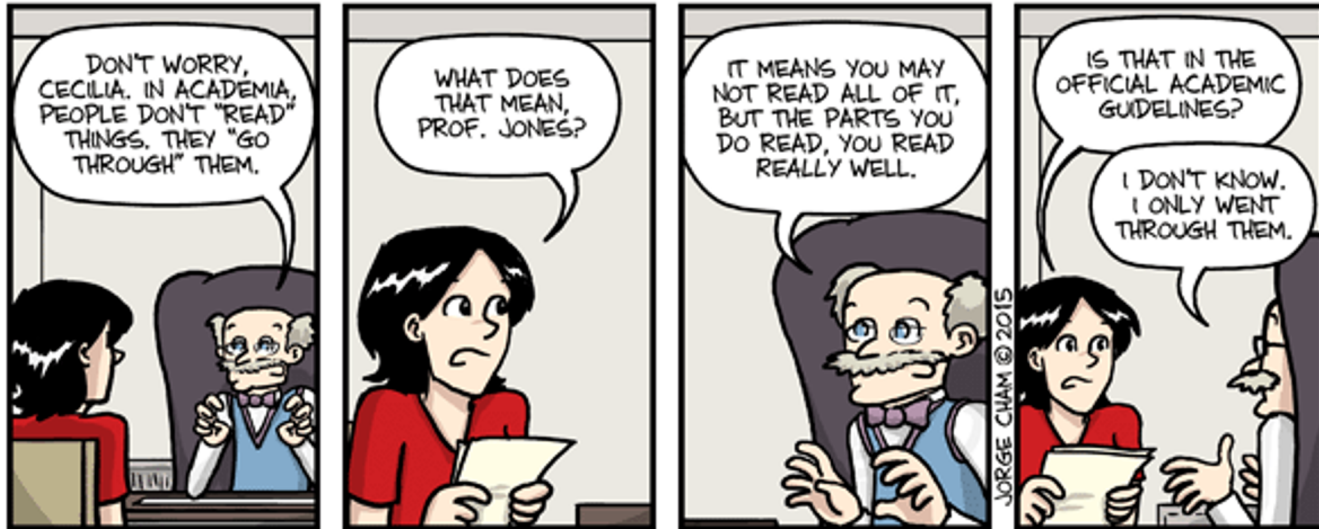


Photo by [Marcelo Leal](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Getting there without willpower

There are all sorts of tactics with which students get things done, even when the doing is something they are not particularly excited about.

- Pomodoro-styled pacing of work
- Simply keeping track of items



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

Questions & Comments?

Collection of tips from previous class:

- Three tips if you are unsure about the thesis topic: (1) read more to get to know, (2) talk to experts (professors, researchers, etc.) for suggestions, and (3) chat informally with your friends for honest feedback.
- Forming a working group is a good habit. Having ppl around you to work and exchange feedback surely help you progress / prevent derailing 🙄🙄🙄🙄
- Pro tip: turn notifications off from all the devices to avoid distractions while working
- Using digital notebook to write my notes about every article I read. I take small notes that can make me remember the whole article (2-3 sentences or just keywords that are relevant to me)
- Leaving the house and exchanging ideas with other people – as the school is closed probably the most challenging part. ;)
- Early morning wake up, easy lunch & coffee, regular workout routine, study buddies or studying in a library help with focusing on work.
- All the writing has to happen somewhere else than home, too much distractions :D
- Make short and long term plans. For the short term I usually make weekly to-do lists and always revise my work for the following day before I finish up for the day.
- Pomodoro technique 😊
- Recommend Bear focus timer (cutest app available for pomodoro and not touching my phone)
- Yes, timing tasks is pretty good, or even setting a timer to kind of limit the mind from strolling off to another galaxy

Continue...

- Taking hand notes works for me(;'ᐃᐃ')
- Changing environment helps to concentrate
- I like doing things outside. And I get a lot of energy from spontaneous bursts, and tend to do things and get the best result in waiting for the supposed “right moment” So I am not very structured.
- Small deadlines for you to have some things done, talk with peers and exchange ideas (they can contribute to your work)
- Saying out loud what should be done that day (Best if saying it to some friend but even to oneself is OK)
- Wake up early, have a routine, change my working environment every so often, meet up with people to discuss ideas and put my phone out of reach
- Sometimes using some classical music to focus
- Form a group might work, would like to try this!
- Setting a role model(s) also helped me keep my motivation:) I printed out pictures of designers I admire and put it on the wall hahah
- You have to understand what kind of writer you are, are you more of an outliner (planning ahead) or pantsner (editing more afterwards).
- I go for jogging whenever I feel stuck.
- Been doing a max of 3 tasks per day for a while and it seems to be ideal. Enough for me to feel accomplished yet not too much
- If it doesn't fit on a post-it, it's not gonna get there haha

Tomorrow

Tutorings

On Tuesday and Thursday you have option to talk about your thesis plans with Namkyu or Heidi.

Should you want, book a tutoring slot in MyCourses. Tutorings take place in Zoom.

Notice that you don't have to participate in tutorings. They are not compulsory part of the course =)



Aalto Day One 7.9.2021 at 13.15

Aalto University opening ceremony of the academic year 2021–2022

Join us as we kick off the new academic year! Our community and partners will come together on Tuesday 7 September to celebrate a fresh beginning to work and studies. During the opening ceremony, we will talk about where our university is headed as well as learn who has been appointed Aalto Distinguished Professor. As in previous years, we will also reveal the five Aalto Award winners, nominated by their peers. The public event will be held online, so you can take part from your favourite spot to study, your living room or a sunny spot in the park. For more information, please visit aalto.fi/day1

Looking forward to starting the upcoming academic year with you!

Ilkka Niemelä
President



Requirements to Pass

- **Submission** of 4 pre-assignments in MyCourses (by Fri 27.8.)
 - **Participation** in 6 contact teaching sessions this week (morning/afternoon of Mon, Wed & Fri)
 - **Doing** 4 assignments in MyCourses:
 - **Submit a finished D-S-M-G-R exercise (By the end of Wednesday 8.9.)**
 - Submit a finished Fourfold exercise (By the end of Thursday 9.9.)
 - Submit a summary of key points after watching a video lecture on Thesis Plan by Turkka Keinonen and listening a podcast by Director of your study program (By the end of Friday 10.9.)
 - Submit a finished Action Plan, including Sociogram (by the end of Wednesday 15.9.)
- *If needed, submit missing, failed or revised assignments (by the end of Friday 17.9.)*

Thank you!

Dr. Heidi Paavilainen, heidi.paavilainen@aalto.fi, Department of Design
Dr. Namkyu Chun, namkyu.chun@aalto.fi, Department of Design