

Writing Your Thesis

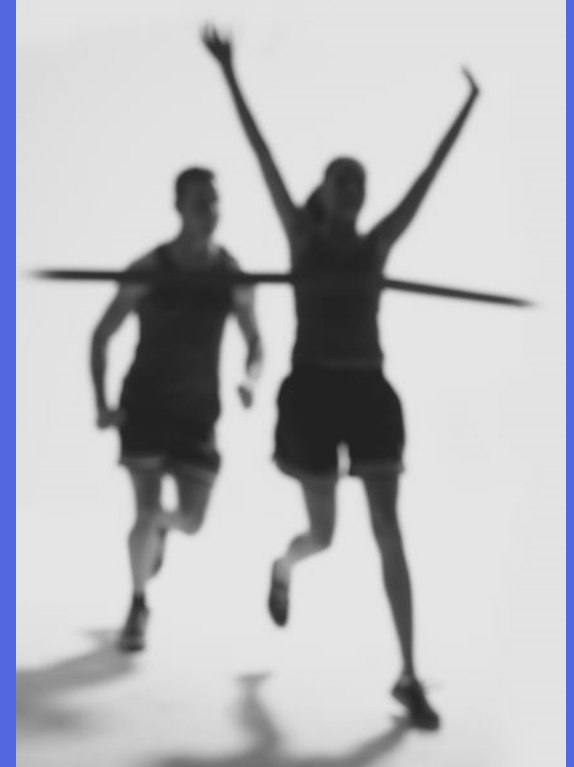
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KNOW THE GOAL



What will your
examiner be looking
for in your thesis?

What should you avoid?

Marking Criteria

- The creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship. This new knowledge must be of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
- A systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
- The general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
- A detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Doctoral Standard Research

Original contribution to knowledge:

- Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:
 - the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication
 - a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice
 - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems
 - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

For a professional doctorate

- The research may be embedded in professional practice, driven by a problem identified from a 'real world' context, making a creative and critical intervention in that context, and leading to a practical outcome as well as a theoretically informed written thesis.



PLAN FOR SUCCESS

Structure

- Make sure the structure is logical - tells the best story
- Discuss plan with Supervisor before you start writing
- Start with abstract and figures
- Set page format before you start writing
- Keep back-up discs of everything

Overview

- Two formats
 - Journal
 - Traditional
- Suggested word count 20-30k words
- Presentation should follow the policy of the registering institution

MMU

<https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/graduate-school/regs-handbook-and-key-documents/pgr-handbook.pdf>

UoM <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=7420>

Headings/Signposts

1 Introduction

1.1 Major section

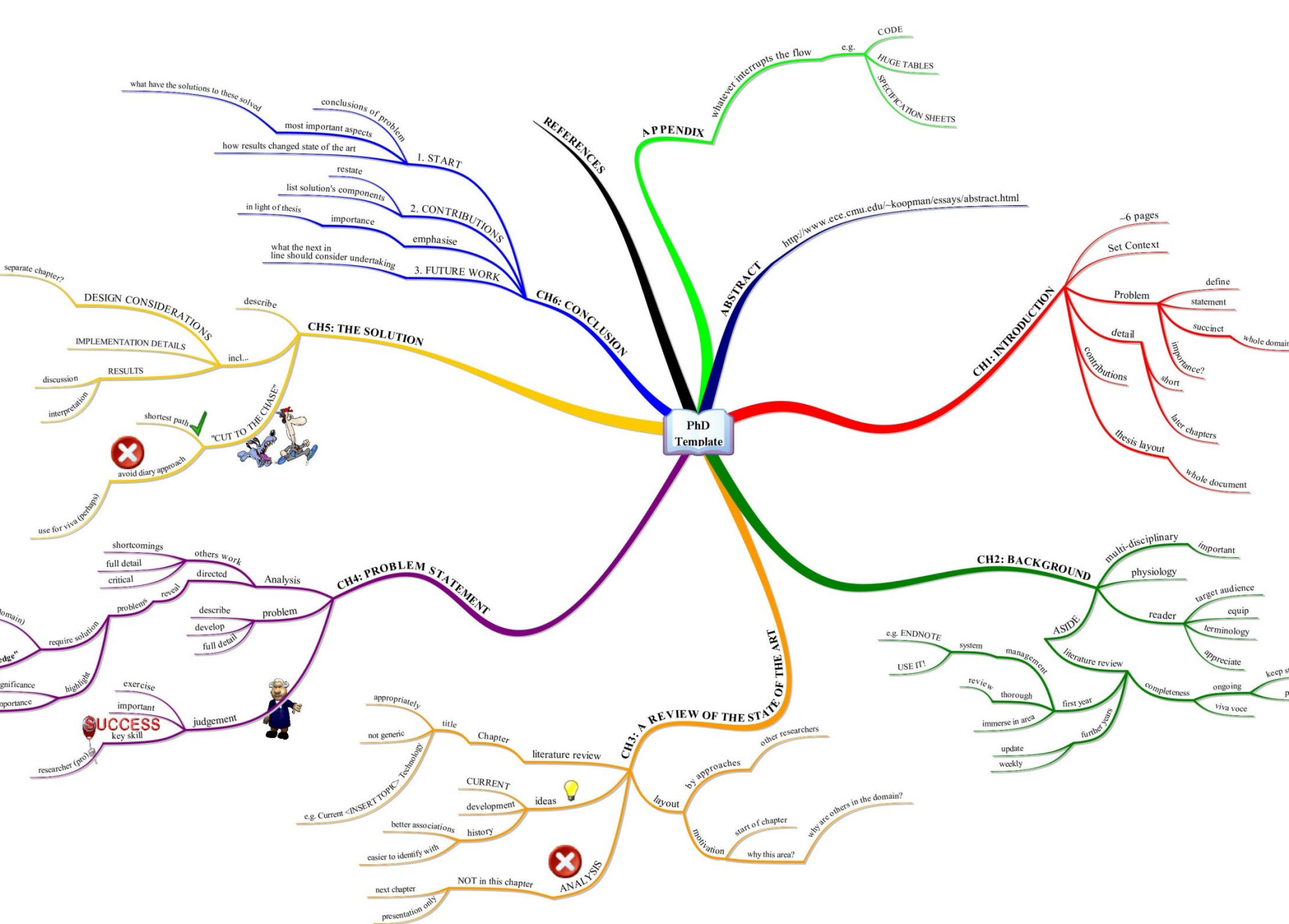
1.1.1 Minor section

1.1.1.1 minor minor section: text
follows on

1.1.2 Next minor section

1.2 Next major section

2 Methods



Thesis Planner

Name:

Date:

Title:

Version:.....

Description of Chapter	Initial Draft	Supervisor	Revised	Revised again	Final version
Front page					
Abstract					
Acknowledgements					
List of Contents					
List of Figures					
List of Tables					
List of Presentations / Published papers					
List of inserted materials in end-papers					
1.0 INTRODUCTION					
1.1 Topic #1					
1.2 Topic #2					
1.2.1 Subtopic #1					
1.2.2 Subtopic #2					
1.2.2(a) Theme (a)					
etc					

Turbocharging your Writing: Thesis Weekly Planner

	Mon		Tues		Wed		Thurs		Fri		Sat		Sun	
	Goal	✓	Goal	✓	Goal	✓	Goal	✓	Goal	✓	Goal	✓	Goal	✓
8-9am														
9-10am														
10-11am														
11-12pm														
12-1pm														
1-2pm														
2-3pm														
3-4pm														
4-5pm														
5-6pm														
6-7pm														
7-8pm														
8pm on														

The next thing is:

To be done by:



**Overall take-home
message**

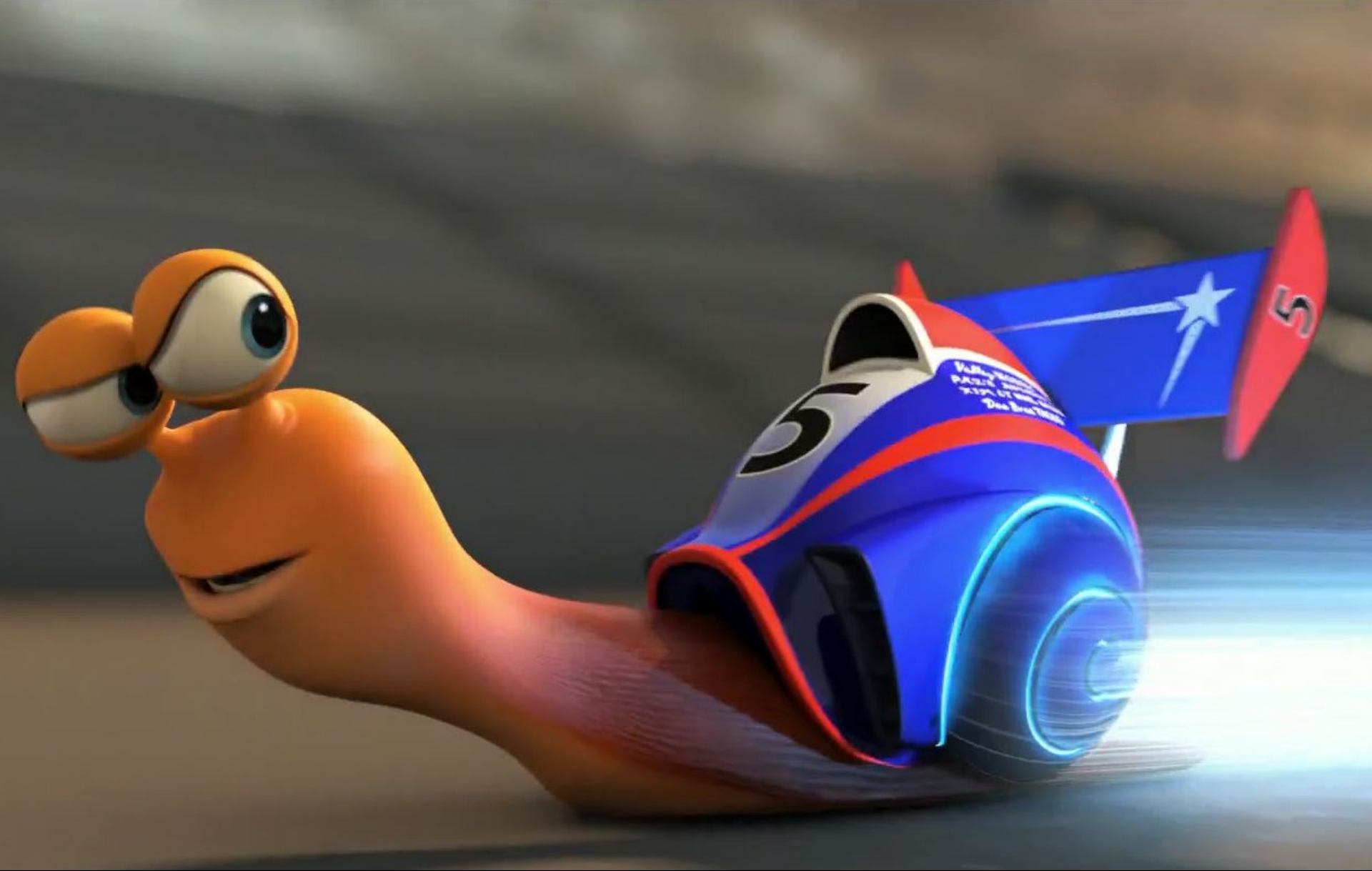
Key Question

Results chapter

Results chapter

Results chapter

Results chapter



Turbocharge your writing



‘Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts.

You need to start somewhere.

Start by getting something – anything - down on paper.

The first draft is the down draft – you just get it down.

The second draft is the up draft – you fix it up’

- Get feedback
- Then edit and hone

Tips for clear writing

Use well-structured paragraphs

1. Introduce the main idea in the first sentence

Tell the reader what it is about (topic sentence)

2. Supporting details

Supporting facts, details and examples

3. Closing sentence

Restate the main idea of the paragraph
using different words

Writing your thesis

- **What**
- **Why**
- **So what**





THESIS ESSENTIALS

A good thesis is...

**Well organised
Clear and concise
Flows logically**

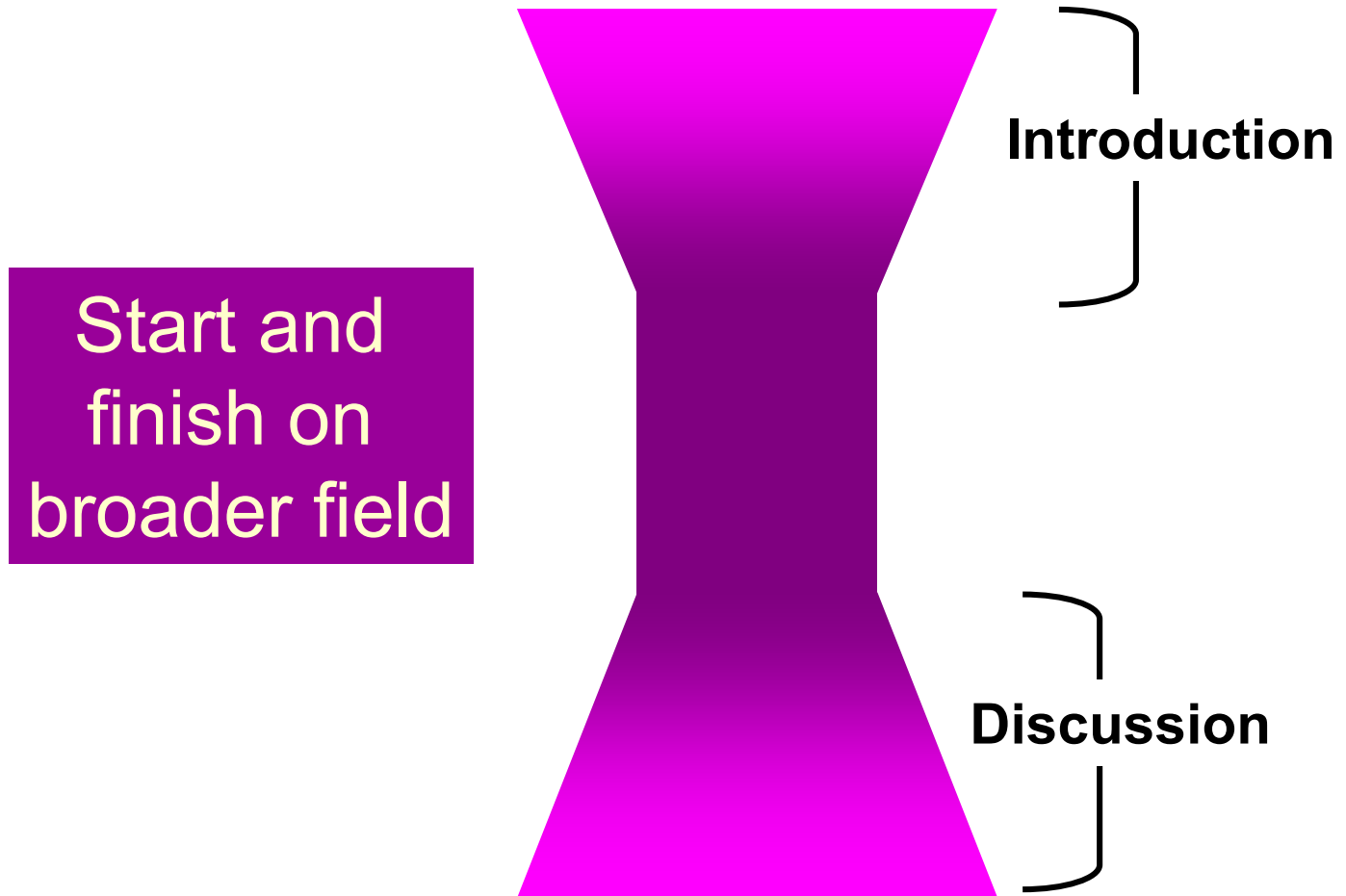
**Accurate
Consistent
Follows guidelines**



**Addresses examiners' likely preconceptions
Handles likely criticisms**

Journal Format	Traditional Format
Abstract	Abstract
Systematic Review / Literature Review	Introduction / Literature Review
Empirical Paper(s)	Methodology (where appropriate)
Critical Appraisal Paper	Results Chapter(s)
References	Discussion and Conclusion
Appendices	References
	Appendices

Thesis: logical flow of ideas



Further support

- <http://thesiswhisperer.com/category/on-writing/>
- www.phd2published.com
- www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk
- Viva Survivors <http://viva-survivors.com/>
- Vitae www.vitae.ac.uk/pgr
- Good Viva Video <http://bit.ly/goodvivavideo>
- Peat et al (2002) Scientific writing: Easy when you know how
- R. Murray (2009) How to survive your viva
- Online learning module for academic writing (Blackboard).



THAT'S PLENTY. BY THE TIME WE ADD AN INTRODUCTION, A FEW ILLUSTRATIONS, AND A CONCLUSION, IT WILL LOOK LIKE A GRADUATE THESIS.



Journal Format

- The aim of journal format is to break the thesis into more manageable, 'bite-sized' chunks
- The advantage of this format is that it gives you the experience of writing in journal paper format.
- Comprises chapters that have been written in the form of journal papers – targeted to a relevant journal in the field.
- Format, presentation and word count will follow the guidelines of the target journal
- These may be papers that have been submitted to a journal, already accepted and published or chapters that are written as journal papers but are not yet submitted or ever intended to be submitted.

Systematic Review

- Default format for the Literature Review –closely linked to the main research project
- This may not suit all projects and an alternative approach should be discussed with the supervisory team
- The level of systematic review should also be agreed
- Presentation:
 - Follow the format and guidelines for the target journal
 - If no word count given the review should be a maximum of 8,000 words (*excluding references and tables*)

Empirical Results Paper

- **Introduction:** Present the background and argument for your review or study. Be explicit about aims, research question and/or hypotheses. *Do not copy and paste from your literature review to your empirical study.*
- **Method:** Include type of review/design, inclusion/exclusion criteria for papers or participants, measures, procedures, quality appraisal or statistical analysis plan
- **Results:** Balance descriptive text and tabulated information with an analysis of data.
- **Discussion:** Present a summary, a discussion of your findings drawing on relevant literature, strengths and limitations of your review/study, clinical and/or theoretical implications, suggestions for future research, conclusions.

Empirical Results - *presentation*

- This paper(s) should also be prepared in accordance with the guidelines of a specific journal
- **Word count:** in line with the target journal (if none stated 8,000 maximum)
- **Co-authors:** The contribution of co-authors must be clearly acknowledged
- **Reference list:** Apply the target journal's referencing style consistently. Include DOI numbers. Use Endnote.
- **Figures and Tables:** For your DClinSci thesis place these in the main text for reading ease but if your manuscript is to be submitted to the journal they should be placed after the reference list.
- **Footnotes:** Can be used to refer the reader to additional discussion points in the *critical reflections paper*

Critical Appraisal Paper

- The focus of this section should be a consideration of how your present project fits in with contributes to theory and clinical practice in the particular field.
- If you have done a systematic review and study, the critical appraisal paper should put the current review and project in the wider context of research and clinical practice and link the review /project findings to relevant theoretical underpinnings.
- *It is not expected that this paper would be submitted to a journal*

What to include?

- Refer to and appraise the research process as a whole, making reference to what was not done and why it was not done, as well as to the work that was actually carried out.
- Strengths and weaknesses of the project (i.e. the work actually carried out rather than the methodology or line of enquiry as a whole)
- Advantages and disadvantages of the broad methodological approach used in the project and consideration of alternative methodologies that could have been utilised.
- Limitations of the line of enquiry as a whole
- Implications for theory and for clinical practice
- Suggestions for further research or implementation

Presentation

- **Word count** (no more than 6,000 words)
- **Duplication and length** - incorporation of publication-style sections in the thesis will invariably lead to some duplication (as each section will have self-contained components that overlap other sections) across the various sections of the thesis
- **References** ???