



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

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## Thesis/Project Preparation Guidelines

*[http://www.csustan.edu/graduate\\_school/pdf-apps-publications/Thesis-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.csustan.edu/graduate_school/pdf-apps-publications/Thesis-Guidelines.pdf)*

## INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on reaching an important milestone in your academic career. When you elected to become a graduate student, you became part of that small segment of academe that chooses to work toward a degree beyond a bachelor's. In fact, in 2000, only 457,056 master's degrees were awarded in the United States — less than 35% of all college and university degrees presented. A requirement for many of those degrees was the successful preparation of a thesis.

If you are like most graduate students, your master's thesis is your first serious, formal attempt to demonstrate the ability to investigate, develop, and synthesize materials from your field into a scholarly document. As such, it becomes the physical representation of your accomplishment and deserves to be presented with pride.

As you know, graduate advisory committees have the important role of supervision and review of theses to ensure content accuracy and compliance with departmental requirements. In addition, the Graduate Council has adopted production guidelines to assure the physical and technical quality of each thesis. The purpose of this guide is to assist you in the preparation of the document that provides visible and permanent evidence of your scholarly achievement. The guidelines are not meant to be restrictive but are intended to make your task simple and straightforward.

Each department has approved a style manual for the student's guidance on technical requirements for references, bibliographic styles, tables, figures, and charts, etc. In addition, the University has adopted styles for publication consistency. Please note, both Departmental and University guidelines must be observed. If there is a conflict between the departmental style manual and the University's guidelines, the University guidelines have precedence.

## ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

A thesis consists of three or four sections. These are preliminary pages, body of the text, documentation, and appendices (if used).

The order in which sections appear in the document is

### *Preliminary pages*

- Title Page
- Approval Page
- Dedication Page (optional)
- Acknowledgments Page (optional)
- Table of Contents
- List of Tables (if used)
- List of Figures (if used)
- List of Symbols (if used)
- Abstract

*Body of the text*

Chapters or sections, tables (if used), and figures (if used).

*Documentation*

References and bibliography (determined by department's style manual).

*Appendices*

Elaborative material (if used).

## SAMPLE LAYOUTS

### Preliminary Pages

*Title Page*

The correct wording, capitalization, and spacing for the title page are given on Sample A. Horizontally all text on the title page should be centered. Vertically each of the four entries should be evenly spaced from the others. In most cases this will result in about 1-3/4" for a top and bottom margin and between each entry.

The length of the title may not exceed 5". If the title is longer than 5", double space and use the inverted pyramid style as follows:

THE THESIS TITLE MUST

NOT EXCEED

5 INCHES

The Title Page is counted, but the number is not printed on the page.

<p><u>Sample A</u></p> <p>THESIS TITLE (All caps and double spaced if more than one line)</p> <p>A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of California State University, Stanislaus</p> <p>In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of (Degree)</p> <p>By Jane Doe Month Year</p>
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### *Approval Page*

Sample B gives the correct wording and spacing for the Certification of Approval Page.

The Approval Page is counted, but the number is not printed on the page.

The Approval Page must be printed on 100% cotton paper. The signatures must be signed in black ink and must be original signatures (not copies) on all copies of the thesis submitted to the University.

If there are more than three committee members, add additional signature lines. If necessary, increase the signature area by deleting space between the author's byline and thesis title and between the Certification of Approval heading and the thesis title.

The correct rank (assistant professor, associate professor or professor) and the discipline of each committee member should be typed under the appropriate signature line. The rank and specific discipline of each committee member can be found in the university catalog.

### *Dedication and Acknowledgments Pages*

The Dedication and Acknowledgments pages are optional. If used, the pages are titled appropriately, and the title is typed in capital letters. The top margin is 1-3/4" as shown in Sample C.

The page number is printed in lower case Roman numerals at the bottom center of the page.

<u>Sample B</u>	
	<i>At least 1 3/4"</i>
CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL	
	<i>About 1 1/2"</i>
Thesis Title	
(All caps and double spaced if more than one line)	
	<i>About 1 1/2"</i>
by Jane Doe	
	<i>About 1 1/2"</i>
<u>Signature lines 3-1/2"</u>	<u>Date lines 2"</u>
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
	<i>About 3/4"</i>
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
	<i>About 3/4"</i>
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
	<i>At least 1"</i>

<u>Sample C</u>	
	<i>A least 1 3/4"</i>
Acknowledgements	
ii	
	<i>At least 1"</i>

*Table of contents*

Sample D and E illustrate possible formats for a Table of Contents. Specific chapter heading or section titles will vary with each thesis. Consult your thesis committee chair for recommendation regarding the organization of your thesis. The layout and spacing of the Table of Contents page are consistent for every thesis. The top margin is at least 1-1/2", and the bottom margin is at least 1-1/4". Page numbers are Roman numerals and centered at least 1" from the bottom of the page. Students should use leader dots, not periods, to line up chapter or section headings with page numbers. For more information on working with leader dots, consult the "Help With Formatting" section of these guidelines.

Sample D

*Top Margin: At least 1-1/2" from top of the page*

TABLE OF CONTENTS		PAGE
Acknowledgements .....		iii
List of Tables.....		vi
List of Figures.....		vii
Abstract .....		viii
Introduction .....		1
Methods and Materials .....		13
Sampling .....		13
Experimental Protocol.....		14
Chlorophyll a Analysis .....		15
DO <sup>14</sup> C Analysis .....		16
PO <sup>14</sup> C Analysis .....		17
Bacterial Analysis .....		18
Calculations for Growth and Grazing / Dilution Technique .....		19
Calculations for POC and DOC Production Rates .....		20
Calculations to Estimate Bacterial Uptake Rates of DOC .....		21
Elimination of Experimental Artifacts .....		22
Results .....		24
Discussion .....		29
References Cited .....		33

Sample E*Top Margin: At least 1-1/2" from top of the page*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgements .....	iii
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Abstract .....	viii
CHAPTER	
I. Introduction to the Study .....	1
Background .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	2
II. Review of the Literature .....	8
Historical Considerations .....	9
Current Paradigms .....	10
Relationship to Other Studies.....	20
Theoretical Foundations.....	25
Expert Opinions.....	27
III. Methodology .....	28
Definition of Terms .....	28
Population and or Sample .....	36
Treatment .....	38
Data Analysis Procedures .....	40
IV. Results .....	42
V. Discussion and Recommendations.....	47
Discussion .....	47
Recommendations .....	57
Appendices	
A. Questionnaire.....	61
B. Comments of Respondents .....	63

### *List of tables*

The format and spacing for the List of Tables page is shown in Sample F. Do not use this page or list it in the Table of Contents unless there is more than one table in the thesis. The page is numbered with Roman numerals at the bottom center.

### *List of figures*

The format and spacing of the List of Figures page is shown on Sample G. Do not use this page or list it in the Table of Contents unless there is more than one figure in the thesis.

### *Abstract*

An abstract must be submitted as part of the thesis. The title, ABSTRACT, is typed in capital letters 1-3/4" from the top of the page. The abstract is typed as a single paragraph, without indentation. It may not be more than one page in length and is numbered with Roman numerals at the bottom center of the page.

Do not include mathematical formulae, diagrams, footnotes, illustrative material or quotations in the abstract.

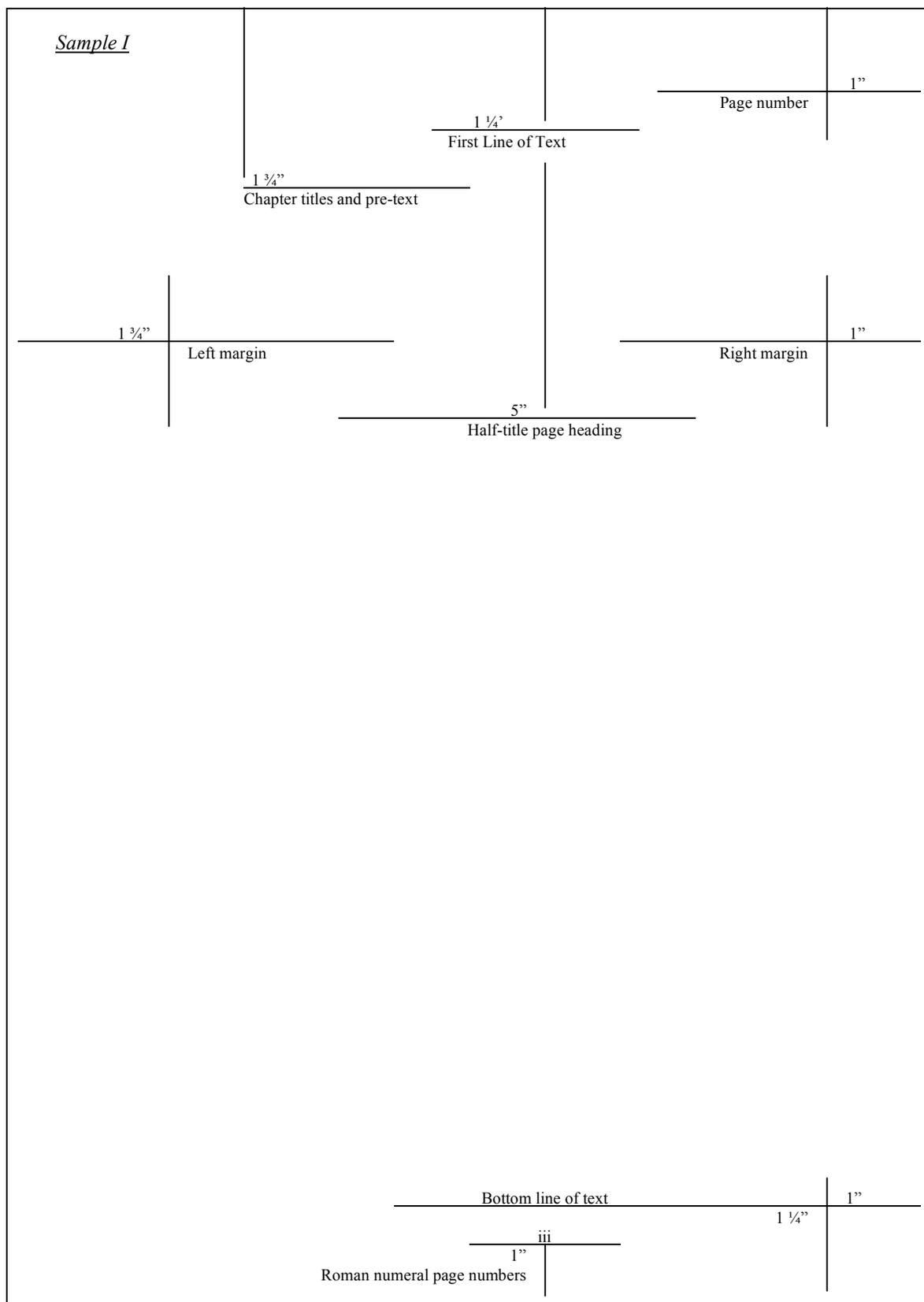
### *Body of the thesis*

The body of the thesis consists of the text that is organized in a way that is consistent with the scholarly standards of the content area. Consult your program's style guide for guidance. The body also contains the tables and figures. Place these in the body of the thesis as soon as possible after the discussion related to each. Sample I illustrates the correct layout for all pages located in the body of the text.

<u>Sample F</u>	
At least 1 3/4"	
LIST OF TABLES	
TABLE	PAGE
1. The titles of tables must be identical to those used in the body of the thesis ..... 11	
iv	
<i>Roman Numerals: Centered at least 1" from the bottom of page</i>	

<u>Sample G</u>	
At least 1 3/4"	
LIST OF FIGURES	
TABLE	PAGE
1. The titles of figures must be identical to the main title in the body of the thesis ..... 12	
v	
<i>Roman Numerals: Centered at least 1" from the bottom of page</i>	

<u>Sample H</u>	
At least 1 3/4"	
ABSTRACT	
The abstract should contain essential information about the thesis and provide an overview of the study. It should state the problem, procedure and methods used, and the results and conclusions of the study.	
vi	
<i>Roman Numerals: Centered at least 1" from the bottom of page</i>	



### Chapters or sections

Sample J shows the layout of the first page of a chapter or section of the thesis. On chapter or section pages and all subsequent pages, text must be double spaced and printed on one side of the page only. Sample K shows the layout for text pages following chapter or section pages.

In most cases, chapters are used to organize the body of the thesis. A possible scheme for chapter organization is illustrated below.

CHAPTER I	Introduction to the Study
CHAPTER II	Review of the Literature
CHAPTER III	Methodology
CHAPTER IV	Results
CHAPTER V	Discussion and Summary

Suggested verb tense for the chapters listed above are:

ABSTRACT	Past
CHAPTER I	Present or past
CHAPTER II	Present or past
CHAPTER III	Past
CHAPTER IV	Past
CHAPTER V	As appropriate

### Reference and appendix pages

Sample L shows the top margin for half pages. The word REFERENCES (or APPENDIX as appropriate), typed in all capital letters, is centered on the page 5-1/2" from the top. The page is counted but not numbered.

References are listed according to your department's style manual. Note: A reference list cites works quoted directly or indirectly in your thesis or project. Each reference must be used in the text. A bibliography lists all the works you have consulted during research.

Sample J

At least 1 3/4"

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER TITLE (in caps)

The number of the first page of each chapter is centered on the bottom of the page with a 1" margin. The left margin of any page is always 1-3/4".

1

Sample K

At least 1 1/4"

2

The first line of a full page begins here.

The page numbers are placed on the upper right corner of the page with at least a 1" top margin and a 1" right margin.

*No page number here.*

Sample L

5-1/2"

REFERENCES

Both the reference and appendix title pages are counted but not numbered. Continue numbering pages in the upper right hand corner following these pages.

*No page number on this page.*

## TYPESETTING YOUR THESIS

1. The entire thesis is to be printed, double spaced, on one side of the page only.
2. Use 100% cotton paper for the two copies to be bound for the University. It is recommended that your personal copies be on the same type of paper because of its permanence. (Regular paper will yellow and begin to deteriorate within a few years.) Acid-free paper requires prior approval by the Graduate School.
3. Use dark, black ink.
4. Acceptable type faces are standard fonts such as Times New Roman, New Century Schoolbook, and Palatino in 10 or 12 point. Typefaces larger than 12 point are not acceptable. Courier, cursive or script fonts, and bold face are not acceptable.
5. Justified margins are only acceptable if spacing within and between words remains uniform.
6. The final bindery-ready copy of your thesis must be laser print quality or equivalent. Dot matrix print or typewritten copy is not acceptable.

## HELP WITH FORMATTING

Some common formatting problems and their potential solutions are discussed below.

1. Setting up the Table of Contents. Use leader dots, not periods, to line up chapter material with page numbers. In many word processing programs leader dots are found under the tab format option. Set a tab at 5.5" and select leader dots and left alignment. To type page numbers, set a tab at 6.0" with a right alignment and no leader dots. The right alignment will assure the page numbers line up correctly.
2. Page Margins. Sample I is a quick reference template for margins. The border box represents the edges of the paper.
3. Page Numbering. The best way to number pages is to use the header/footer feature contained within most word processing software. Using this feature will insure that the pages numbers are formatted consistently throughout the thesis. It will also allow the document to auto correct page numbers if the thesis is repaginated. In many word processors the page numbering feature is found under insert > page numbers. On most pages in the thesis the page number should be place on the upper right corner of the page. The number should be at least 1" from the right edge of the page and 1" from the top edge of the page. If placed properly the number will align with the right text margin of the page and be about 1/4" above the first line of text on the page. There are two exceptions to the page numbering pattern. First, the Title Page is page one of your thesis but it does not have a page number printed on it. Second, the Table of Contents pages, List of Tables pages and List of Figures pages are numbered with Roman numerals which are centered at the bottom of the page. The Roman numeral should be at least 1" from the bottom of the page.
4. Avoid typesetting instructions in your finished copy. Because most people now have access to a computer, it is possible to produce publication ready copy and typesetting instructions are no longer needed. For example, do not underline words; use italics instead. Underlining words is one of the old fashioned methods of giving instructions to a printer. It tells the typesetter to put all underlined letters in italics.

Another typesetter instruction that should be avoided is using two hyphens to indicate em or en dashes. Em dashes (—) are the long dashes that appear in type and en dashes (–) are the shorter dashes that appear in type. Neither are hyphens. If you do not know how to generate an em or en dash, consult your word processing help file.

## SOME COMMON WRITING PROBLEMS

Some common writing problems found in student theses and the solutions to them are listed below.

1. Pronoun–Antecedent Agreement. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent noun in number. A common error is using *they* to refer to a singular noun. It is incorrect to say: “A student was selected because they met the criteria for the study.” The correct form is “A student was selected because he or she met the criteria for the study.”

2. Gender: Pronouns must also agree in gender with the noun they replace by being masculine, feminine or neuter. This rule also applies to relative pronouns. The use of relative pronouns is restricted to *who* for human beings only. *That* or *which* is used for animals and things.

Neuter pronouns apply to animals (it) unless they are named. If the individual animal is named then use *he* or *she* as appropriate.

3. Who or whom. The APA has a good trick for remembering when to use who or whom. “If you can substitute *he* or *she*, *who* is correct; if you can substitute *him* or *her*, *whom* is the correct pronoun.”

4. Subject–Verb Agreement. A verb must agree in number (singular or plural) with the noun despite the number of intervening phrases.

5. Do not use simple pronouns such as *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* alone. To do so will create ambiguity in your sentences. Clarify the material by writing “this book, these students, that project” etc.

6. In or Within? *In* means to or toward the inside or to have a position or influence. Examples are “went into the house,” “in the office.” *Within* means of the interior such as *within* the mind, *within* the next hour, or *within* the enclosure.

7. That or Which? *That* is followed by material that is essential to the sentence. *Which* is followed by information that is informative but is not essential to the sentence.

8. Ending a sentence with a preposition. Avoid sentences such as “Whom do you want to go to the store with?”

9. Misplaced or dangling modifiers. Place an adjective or adverb as close to the noun or verb it modifies as possible to avoid unclear sentences. (Find the misplaced modifier in this sentence?)

10. Split infinitives. For example, “to effectively use” is incorrect. “To use effectively” is correct.

11. Do not join words with virgules (ex. he/she instead of he or she). This style is too informal for a scholarly paper.

12. Dates. The plural of dates is formed by adding an s. An apostrophe is not used. The correct form is 1960s not 1960’s. To indicate a date range use an en dash not a hyphen. The correct form is 1960–1971 not 1960-1971.

13. Titled or Entitled. Entitled means that you have personally given a name to something such as an article or a book. Titled means that another person has given a name to something such as an article or a book. For example: I entitled my article “Yes, the Little Things Count.” The article by Williams was titled “Yes, the Little Things Count.”

14. Consistency. An important reminder for you is to be consistent in the presentation of your thesis. For example, if you number items in a series, use the same format throughout. If you capitalize a certain word, do so whenever that word occurs.

16. Block quotations. Block quotations are double spaced and indented 1/2" from the left margin (the same position as a paragraph indentation). Do not indent the right margin. Type subsequent lines flush with the first indent. If there are additional paragraphs in the quotation, double space between paragraphs and indent the first line of each paragraph five spaces from the margin of the quotation. Do not use quotation marks. A full citation of the source is used after the final punctuation.

17. Epigraphs. When an epigraph is used at the beginning of a chapter, it may be blocked on the right half or two-thirds of the page, or centered. Do not use quotation marks and single space the quote. The name of the author of the quotation and the title of its source are given below the epigraph and are listed in the reference section.

18. The word “data” is always plural. Data are, not data is.

If you have questions not answered by these guidelines, please refer to your department's style manual or contact your thesis committee chairperson.