



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

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Master's Thesis/Project Doctoral Dissertation Preparation Guidelines

http://www.csustan.edu/grad/thesis_project.html

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 an advanced degree. According to the 2010 CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degree report, a total of more than 587,000 graduate certificates and degrees were awarded in the United States in the academic year 2008-09 (57,599 doctoral degrees, 502,713 master's degrees, and 27,193 graduate certificates) — approximately 25% of all college and university degrees presented. A requirement for many of those degrees was the successful preparation of a thesis or dissertation.

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/dissertation. 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/DISSERTATION

A thesis/dissertation normally 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 as follows:

Preliminary pages

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

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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. Text on the title page should be centered between the left (1 3/4") and right (1") margins. 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.

If the title is longer than 5", double space and use the inverted pyramid style as follows:

THIS IS A SAMPLE OF A TITLE
ENTERED IN INVERTED
PYRAMID STYLE

Other than titles exceeding one line, all text on this page should be single spaced. The Title Page is counted, but the *number is not printed* on the page.

Sample A

THESIS TITLE
(All caps, double spaced, and inverted pyramid if longer than 5")

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of
California State University, Stanislaus

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of (Degree)

By
Jane Doe
Month Year
(No comma between month and year. Also note that the month, not the semester, should be listed here.)

Approval Page

Sample B(1) 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 or dark blue 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 the thesis or dissertation title and between the Certification of Approval heading and the thesis/dissertation 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 may be found in the university catalog.

Approval Page for Electronic Publishing

As of fall 2010, the University Library is beginning to accept CSU Stanislaus doctoral dissertations. *It is the University's policy that all completed and approved dissertations shall be submitted and published in electronic format.* (Master theses will continue to be accepted in print format.)

For security reasons, *the approval page of the electronic dissertation shall include no signatures.* The signed approval page shall be submitted separately and placed on file in the University Library. Sample B(2) illustrates the format of the unsigned approval page in the electronic dissertation; an explanation banner is inserted in the middle of the page. *(The original signed approval page shall be formatted as in sample B(1).)*

Sample B(1) *At least 1 ¼"*

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

About 1 ½"

THESIS OR DISSERTATION TITLE
(All caps, double spaced, and inverted pyramid if more than one line)

About 1 ½"

by
Jane Doe

About 1 ½"

<u>Signature lines 3-1/2"</u>	<u>Date lines 2"</u>
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>About ¾"</i>	
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>About ¾"</i>	
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>At least 1"</i>	

Sample B(2) *At least 1 ¼"*

CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL

DISSERTATION TITLE
(All caps, double spaced, and inverted pyramid if more than one line)

by
Jane Doe

Signed Certification of Approval Page is
On File with the University Library

Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>About ¾"</i>	
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>About ¾"</i>	
Dr. Major Adviser Professor of (Discipline)	Date
<i>At least 1"</i>	

Dedication and Acknowledgements Pages

The Dedication and Acknowledgements 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" and the bottom margin is at least 1", as shown in Sample C(1) and C(2).

Text on these pages should be double spaced and in paragraph form.

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

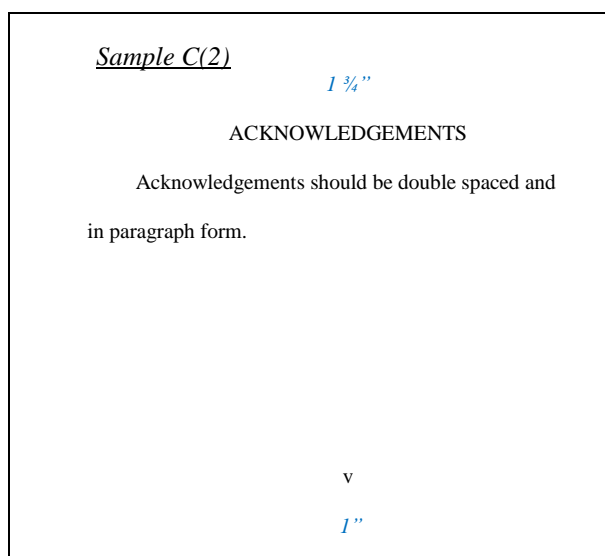
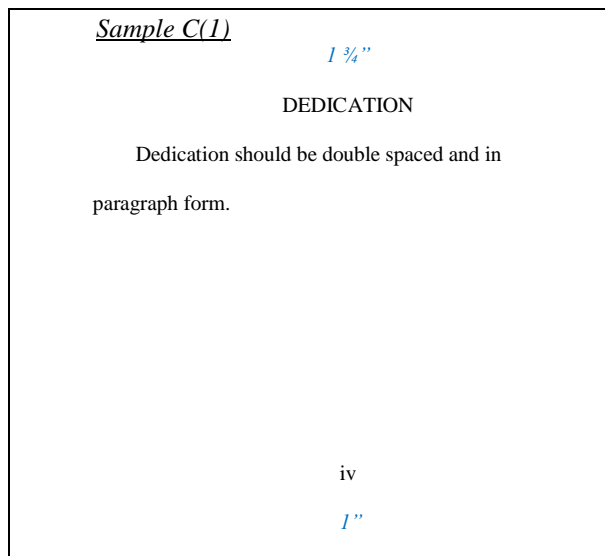


Table of Contents

Sample D and E on the next two pages illustrate possible formats for a Table of Contents. These samples correspond to the two formatting templates available at the Graduate School Website. Specific chapter heading or section titles will vary with each thesis (or dissertation). Consult your thesis (or dissertation) committee chair for recommendation regarding the organization of your thesis/dissertation. The layout and spacing of the Table of Contents page are consistent for every thesis (or dissertation). The top margin is 1-1/2", the bottom margin is 1-1/4", the left margin is 1-3/4", and the right margin is 1". Page numbers are Roman numerals and centered 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: 1-1/2" from top of the page*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Abstract	ix
Introduction	1
Methods and Materials	13
Sampling	13
Experimental Protocol	14
Chlorophyll a Analysis	15
DO ¹⁴ C Analysis	16
PO ¹⁴ C Analysis	17
Bacterial Analysis	22
Calculations for Growth and Grazing / Dilution Technique	28
Calculations for POC and DOC Production Rates	30
Calculations to Estimate Bacterial Uptake Rates of DOC	40
Elimination of Experimental Artifacts	50
Results	55
Discussion	62
References Cited	100
Appendix	102

Sample E*Top margin: 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
Relationship to Other Studies	20
Theoretical Foundations.....	25
III. Methodology	28
Definition of Terms.....	28
Treatment	38
Data Analysis Procedures	40
IV. Results	42
V. Discussion and Recommendations.....	47
Discussion	47
Recommendations.....	57
References.....	59
Appendices	
A. Questionnaire	61
B. Comments of Respondents.....	63

List of Tables and List of Figures

The format and spacing for the List of Tables and List of Figures pages are shown in Samples F and G. *Do not use these pages or list them in the Table of Contents unless there is more than one table or figure in the thesis or dissertation.* The pages are numbered with Roman numerals at the bottom center.

Abstract

An abstract must be submitted as part of the thesis/dissertation. The title, ABSTRACT, is typed in capital letters 1-3/4" from the top of the page. The abstract page is numbered with Roman numerals at the bottom center of the page.

Do not underestimate the importance of a clear, concise, and accurate abstract. *The abstract should contain your research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results, data analysis, and conclusions. It should be a single paragraph on a single page, double-spaced, without indentation, and normally should not exceed 350 words.*

The abstract should report rather than comment or evaluate. Do not include mathematical formulae, diagrams, footnotes, illustrative material, or quotations in the abstract. Consult your program's style guide for guidance.

Body of the Thesis or Dissertation

The body of the thesis (or dissertation) 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.

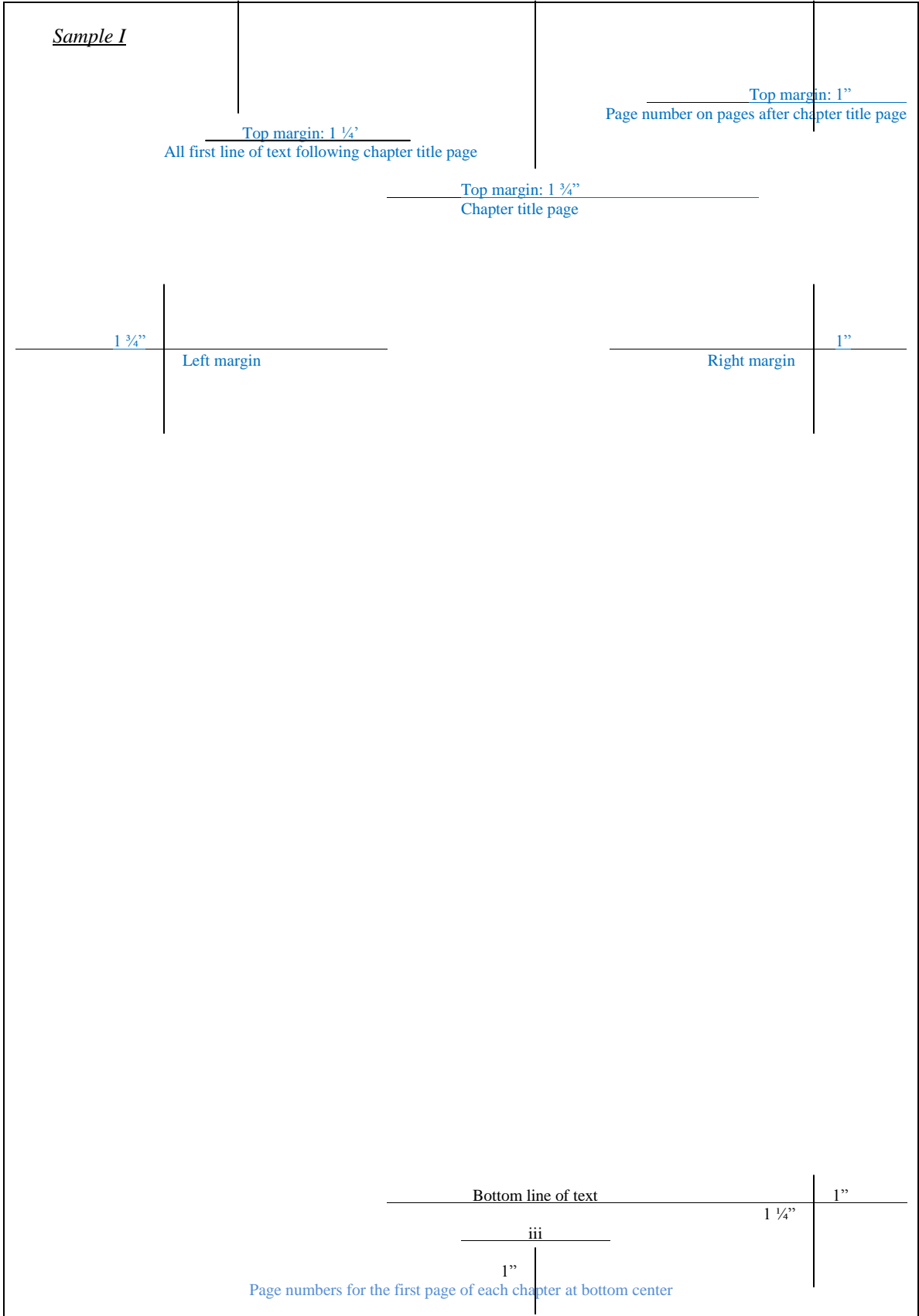
The body also contains the tables and figures. Place these in the body of the thesis/dissertation as soon as possible after the discussion related to each.

Sample I on the next page illustrates the correct layout for all pages located in the body of the text.

<u>Sample F</u>	
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
2. Items longer than one line are single spaced, with double spacing between	15
iv	
<i>Roman numerals: centered 1" from the bottom of page</i>	

<u>Sample G</u>	
1 3/4"	
LIST OF FIGURES	
FIGURE	PAGE
1. The titles of figures must be identical to the main title in the body of the thesis	12
2. Items longer than one line are single spaced, with double spacing between	15
v	
<i>Roman numerals: centered 1" from the bottom of page</i>	

<u>Sample H</u>	
1 3/4"	
ABSTRACT	
The abstract should contain essential information about the thesis and provide an overview of the study. It should be a single paragraph on a single page, double-spaced, without indentation, and normally should not exceed 350 words.	
vi	
<i>Roman numerals: centered 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/dissertation. 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/dissertation. 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 APPENDICES 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.

The first page of References (following the title page) should also be titled "REFERENCES," 1-3/4" from the top of the page. Likewise, each appendix should be titled ("APPENDIX A," for example) 1-3/4" from the top of the page.

Sample J

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.

Page numbers are placed in the upper-right corner of all subsequent pages in the chapter (see Sample K below).

The left margin of any page is always 1 3/4".

1

Sample K

1 1/4"

The first line of a full page begins here.

2

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/DISSERTATION

1. The entire thesis/dissertation is to be printed, double spaced, on one side of the page only. Single spacing is acceptable for longer block quotations (i.e., quotation comprises more than 40 words, displayed in a freestanding block of text without quotation marks). Judicious triple and quadruple spacing is acceptable where it improves readability (e.g., before and after headings).

2. *Minimum* margins for every page (including appendices) are as follows: Top, 1-1/4"; Bottom, 1"; Left, 1-3/4"; Right, 1". Refer to the samples and guidelines above for margin requirements specific to individual sections and pages. Justified right margins should not be used.

3. The preferred font is Times New Roman or a similar serif font in 10 or 12 point. Typefaces larger than 12 point are not acceptable. The same font must be used throughout the document. Sans serif, cursive, or script fonts are not acceptable. Boldface is not acceptable except where specifically required by a style manual (e.g., boldface headings in APA style).

4. Use white 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.) The most commonly used paper weights are 20 lb., 24 lb., and 32 lb.

5. Use dark, black ink only. Color is acceptable within tables and figures only where it is absolutely necessary.

6. The final bindery-ready copy of your thesis/dissertation must be laser print quality or equivalent. Dot matrix print or typewritten copy is not acceptable.

HELP WITH FORMATTING

Formatting templates, Microsoft Word documents pre-formatted according to these guidelines, are available at the Graduate School Website. Students may choose to use a template or to format their own documents from scratch.

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.

2. Page Margins. Sample I is a quick reference template for margins. The border box represents the edges of the paper. Please note that even when materials in the appendices are photocopied from other sources or formatted differently from the rest of the thesis/dissertation, minimum margins still apply.

3. Tabs. Use the tabs feature in your word processor to indent paragraphs uniformly.

4. **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/dissertation. It will also allow the document to auto correct page numbers if the thesis/dissertation is repaginated. In many word processors the page numbering feature is found under insert > page numbers. On most pages in the thesis/dissertation the page number should be placed on the upper right corner of the page. The number should be 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 three exceptions to the page numbering pattern. First, the Title Page is page one of your thesis/dissertation 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 centered 1" from the bottom of the page. Third, page numbers on chapter title pages are centered at the bottom of the page, 1" from the bottom of the page.

5. **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.

6. **Block quotations.** Block quotations are 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.

7. **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. 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.

SOME COMMON WRITING PROBLEMS

Most style manuals, including APA and MLA, contain extensive guidelines for grammar, mechanics, punctuation, and other general writing concerns. It is highly recommended that students review the applicable style manual thoroughly for guidance in these areas.

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:

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“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” or “Students were selected because they 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.
3. Neuter pronouns (*it*) apply to animals unless they are named. If the individual animal is named then use *he* or *she* as appropriate.
4. 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.”
5. Subject–Verb Agreement. A verb must agree in number (singular or plural) with the noun despite the number of intervening phrases.
6. 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.
7. In or Within? *In* means to or toward the inside or to have a position of 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.”
8. That or Which? *That* is followed by material that is essential to the sentence. *Which* is followed by nonessential information, which is informative but not essential to the sentence.
9. Ending a sentence with a preposition. Avoid sentences such as “Whom do you want to go to the store with?”
10. Misplaced modifiers.
 - a. Incorrect usage: *Place an adjective or adverb as close to the noun or verb it modifies as possible to avoid unclear sentences.*
 - b. Correct usage: *Place an adjective or adverb as close as possible to the noun or verb it modifies to avoid unclear sentences.*
11. Dangling modifiers. A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that modifies a subject, where the subject is not clearly stated.
 - a. Incorrect usage: *After eating dinner, the dishes were done.* (*The dishes* are the subject of this sentence, yet the dishes did not eat dinner. Therefore, *after eating dinner* is a dangling modifier, a modifier without a subject.)
 - b. Correct usage: *After eating dinner, John did the dishes.*
12. Split infinitives. For example, *to effectively use* is incorrect. *To use effectively* is correct.
13. Do not join words with virgules (ex. he/she instead of he or she). This style is too informal for a scholarly paper.
14. 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.
15. 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.”

16. Consistency. An important reminder is to be consistent in the presentation of your thesis/dissertation. 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.
17. The word “data” is always plural. *Data are*, not *data is*.

SUBMITTING YOUR THESIS/DISSERTATION FOR REVIEW

When your thesis or dissertation is completed, formatted, and approved by your faculty committee, it is ready for reader review. Refer to the Graduate School’s Thesis/Project Website or your program’s Website for reader review priority dates by semester.

Readers are professionals retained by the University to aid students in insuring the thesis/dissertation meets all University requirements. Readers will check your thesis/dissertation for formatting, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, internal consistency, and adherence to both the appropriate style manual and these guidelines.

Readers do not serve as editors. They offer assistance in final proofreading, but the thesis/dissertation is your product, and you hold full responsibility for insuring its quality. You should take steps to see that the manuscript is thoroughly proofread *before* submitting it for reader review. It is a good idea to enlist the help of qualified friends or professional proofreaders. Submitting a manuscript with extensive errors can significantly delay the process, in some cases even causing you to miss deadlines necessary for graduation. Reader review takes approximately two weeks (14 days). At the end of this time period, you will be notified with one of the following decisions:

- *Reviewed:* Your thesis/dissertation was found to require only minor corrections, and you may pick up your reviewed copy and begin making corrections and preparing your bindery-ready copy(s). You will need to bring your bindery-ready copy(s) as well as the original reader-reviewed copy back to the Library by the bindery deadline.
- *Not Reviewed:* If your thesis/dissertation is found to require extensive corrections, the Reader will halt the review and return it. You will receive notification that your thesis/dissertation cannot be reviewed as submitted, and you will have a short window of time to proofread fully, revise as needed, and resubmit for a second review. The reader will provide a list of the types of errors found in the partial review to give you some guidance in revising, though most individual errors will not be marked since the review will not have been completed. Please note that bindery deadlines still apply, and if you cannot complete the thesis/dissertation before the deadline, you will have to reapply for graduation in the next term.

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