

# The Writing Process

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The Writing Center

# Your Most Important Resources

- \* Office of Graduate Studies  
[https://inside.mines.edu/Graduate\\_School](https://inside.mines.edu/Graduate_School) Info, Forms, Policies  
\*\*Thesis submission & formatting guidelines
- \* Electronic Theses & Dissertations [http://inside.mines.edu/ET D-home](http://inside.mines.edu/ET_D-home)
- \* Advisor and Committee
  - Discipline and department specific requirements
  - Content
    - Your peers can also read for content
- \* Writing Center: grammar, organization, academic norms

# The Process: Pre-Defense

1. Select thesis topic, advisor, and committee
2. Submit Thesis Committee Form
3. Submit Research Proposal (1 yr. in advance of defense)
4. Compose and submit draft to advisor, according to Thesis Checklist <http://inside.mines.edu/checklist>
5. Schedule defense, then submit Thesis Defense Request Form
6. Defend thesis (at least 1 week before the upload deadline)

# Working With Your Advisor

- \* Actively maintain open communication
- \* Have a discussion about process and expectations EARLY on
- \* At each meeting, set a plan of action or agree on “next steps” and timelines
- \* Determine importance of different aspects of writing (both content and style)

# The Writing

- \* Two considerations that drive all written work:
  - \* 1) **Audience:** who will be reading this?
  - \* 2) **Purpose:** what am I trying to achieve?

Keep these two elements in mind when deciding whether to include information, to read (yet another) book, defining terms or jargon...

# Writing Strategies

- \* Make outlines/plans, even if you stray from them
- \* Set short-term achievable deadlines
- \* Save the “front matter” until last: this likely changes

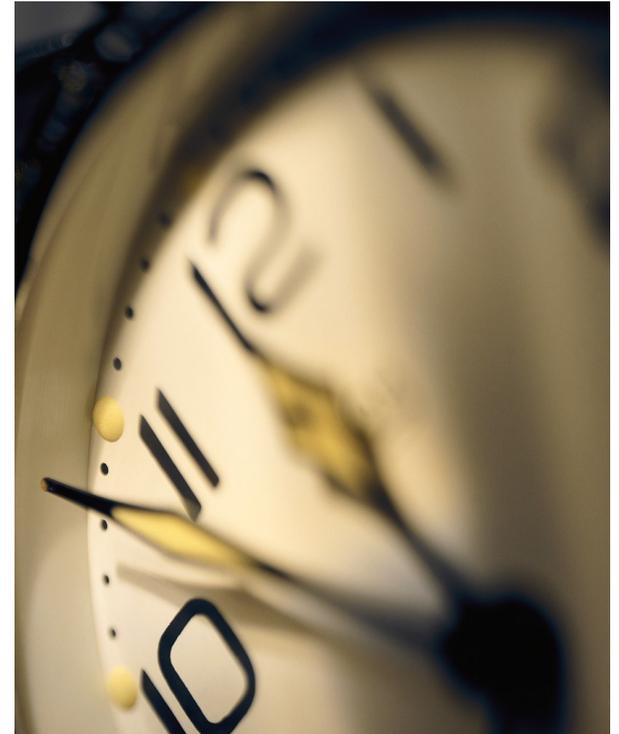


# More Strategies

- \* Write the introduction after the body is complete
- \* Always get something on the page, even if it's only bibliographic information
- \* Make at least three back-ups of your files
- \* Print each draft on different colored paper
- \* Take time away from writing
- \* Get all the deadlines on your calendar early
- \* Don't wait to get your committee going and schedule your defense early too

# Time Management

- \* Set those deadlines
- \* Write every day---- observe when you're most productive, try to set that time aside for writing
- \* Be okay with writing as a process, not a product



# Conducting Literature Searches

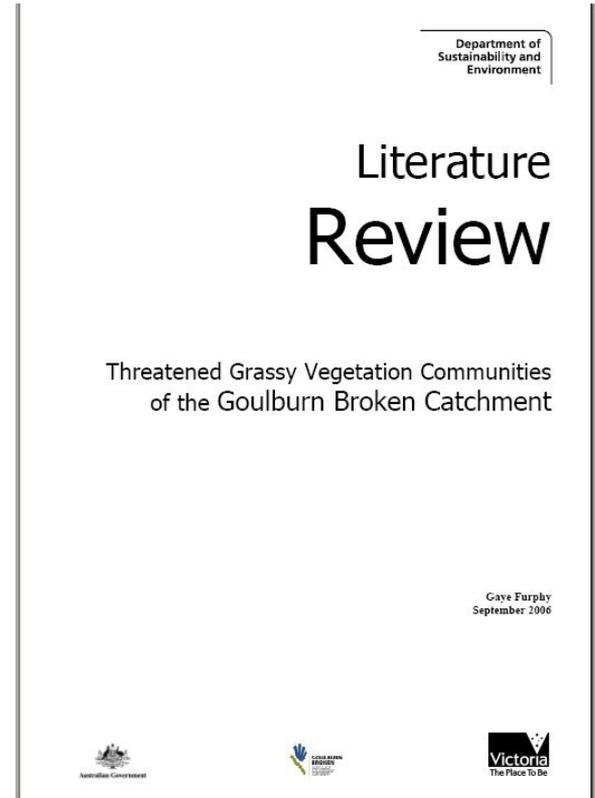
- \* Discipline Dependent
- \* No minimum number (some theses have as few as 30 sources and dissertations have well over 100)
- \* Bottom line: “Does anyone want to read more about the background than I now have? Am I getting redundant or peripheral?”

# Purposes of the Literature Review

- \* To determine whether your question has already been answered by someone else
- \* Where did the problem come from?
- \* What is already known about this problem?
- \* What other methods have been tried?
- \* Identify the seminal work in your area
- \* Identify opposing views
- \* Identify gaps in the literature

# Starting the Literature Review

- \* Try journals that print abstracts to get overview of scope
- \* Look at references from other authors
- \* Talk to your advisor
- \* Take thorough notes! (include bibliographic info)



# Avoiding Plagiarism

- \* MAKE CLEAR WHAT IS YOURS. If you use a result, observation or generalization that is not your own, you must state where in the scientific literature that result is reported.
  - \* (Exception: where all readers know it, e.g. dynamics equations need not reference Newton.)
- \* CITE, CITE, CITE---you can't over cite, but you can lose it all if you under cite

# Use Campus Resources

- \* For content and field questions, see your advisor and committee members
- \* For format, submission, a deadline questions see the Office of Graduate Studies
- \* For organization, grammar, clarity and everything writing related please see the Writing Center and schedule an appointment at <http://mines.mywconline.com> (We are located in Alderson 133).

# LAIS Writing Center--Alderson 133

- \* Open to all faculty and students, and will work with any type of writing
- \* This is a tutorial service, not a proofreading service
- \* 30 or 60 minute appointments available Monday-Friday from 9:00 AM-5:00 PM.
  - \* 60 minute appointments are highly recommended for thesis writers
- \* Plan on working on approximately 5-10 pages of text per appointment
- \* Help with all aspects of writing including organization, grammar, academic expectations, clarity, coherence, etc.
- \* Thesis formatting help is offered near upload deadlines. You can make an appointment under “Thesis Formatting” or stop by during our walk-in hours. See the schedule at <http://inside.mines.edu/LAIS-Writing-Center->

# Contact Information

- \* The Writing Center Co-Coordinator:
  - \* Melanie Brandt [mbrandt@mines.edu](mailto:mbrandt@mines.edu)
  - \* Seth Tucker [stucker@mines.edu](mailto:stucker@mines.edu)
- \* Questions about the presentation today or the walk-in thesis formatting help hours?
  - \* Allyce Horan [ahoran@mines.edu](mailto:ahoran@mines.edu)