WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
THE HENRY EDWIN SEVER GRADUATE SCHOOL
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

A MOCK THESIS ILLUSTRATING THE PROPER FORMAT OF
THESES AND DISSERTATIONS
By
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Thesis presented to the Henry Edwin Sever Graduate School of
Washington University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
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This mock thesis illustrates the Henry Edwin Sever Graduate School rules for formatting a thesis/dissertation. It includes information on what components a thesis/dissertation should include, and how pages of a thesis/dissertation should be formatted. Follow each rule precisely: There are no exceptions to these rules. If you have questions, please check with the Thesis Advisor in the Engineering Registrar’s Office, located in Lopata Hall, room 324.
To all future Sever Institute graduate students
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Preface

This guide contains the Sever Institute rules for formatting theses and dissertations.¹ Departments, advisors, and committees may impose additional rules. In the past, students were required to study a similar (but much longer) set of rules and apply them to their theses. However, the Association of Graduate Engineering Students has prepared templates and style files that simplify thesis preparation. These files have been set up to produce properly formatted theses and dissertations using several popular word processing and text formatting programs. Students can retrieve these files and their accompanying instructions from the AGES home page http://classes.cec.wustl.edu/~ages/index.shtml. Students who create their own templates or style files are invited to submit these files to GES for inclusion in the AGES home page.

Thanks to the many graduate students and professors who reviewed drafts of this document and helped set up templates and style files.

¹. Throughout this guide, the word thesis refers to both theses and dissertations.
Chapter 1

Thesis Format

The following guidelines offer you some flexibility in formatting your thesis. Wherever the guidelines give you a choice of options, you must select one option and use it consistently throughout your thesis. These options are summarized in Table 1-1.

1.1 Margins

Set the left margin at 1.5 inches on all pages. Set the top, bottom, and right margins at 1-inch on all pages.

1.2 Page Numbers

Unless otherwise specified, count and number all pages of your thesis. Number the front matter (all pages that come before the first page of chapter 1) with a centered lowercase Roman numeral, set just above the bottom margin. Number the remaining pages with Arabic numerals set just below the top margin and just to the left of the right margin. The first page of the first chapter should be page 1.

1.3 Body Text

Use a 10-point, 11-point, or 12-point Times Roman or Times New Roman font for the text of your thesis. Use double line spacing or 1.5 line spacing for most body text. Block quotes should be single spaced. You may use either left justification with a ragged right
edge, or full justification. Paragraphs may be set in a block style, with no indentation, or they may be indented up to 0.5 inch. Skip a line between paragraphs.

**TABLE 1-1. Thesis Formatting Options**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Element</th>
<th>Formatting Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>title page font</td>
<td>12-point or 14-point Times or Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>table of contents chapter title font</td>
<td>bold or plain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first-level table of contents indentation</td>
<td>0 to 0.5 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second-level table of contents indentation</td>
<td>0 to 1 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body text font</td>
<td>10-point, 11-point, or 12-point Times or Roman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body text line spacing</td>
<td>1.5 or 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body text justification</td>
<td>left or full</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paragraph indentation</td>
<td>0 to 0.5 inch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter title position</td>
<td>1.5 to 3 inches below top edge of page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter title style</td>
<td>heading preceded by the word “Chapter” and the chapter number or heading precede only by the chapter number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chapter title</td>
<td>10-point to 36-point font, centered or left-justified, plain or bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>section heading</td>
<td>10-point to 24-point font, centered or left-justified, plain or bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subsection heading</td>
<td>10-point to 18-point font, centered or left-justified, plain or bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unnumbered headings</td>
<td>10-point to 14-point font, plain or bold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>table labels</td>
<td>label tables as “Table” or “Figure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parenthetical reference style</td>
<td>author-date system, numbered, or another style acceptable to your committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference list style</td>
<td>any style acceptable to your committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.4 Titles and Headings

Titles and headings may be left-justified or centered. Capitalize the first letter of the first word and the first letter of each subsequent major word in a title or heading. Do not capitalize articles, prepositions, and conjunctions that are not the first word of a title or heading. For example, do not capitalize such words as the following: a, an, the, for, to, on, or. Formatting specifications for particular types of headings and titles are described below. You may use a plain or bold version of the body text font for all titles and headings.

1.4.1 Chapter Titles

Begin each chapter on a new page. You may start the chapter title below the top margin and page number (1.5 inches from the top edge of the page), or you may leave some space and start the chapter title up to 3 inches from the top edge of the page. There are two options for formatting the chapter title:

- Type the word “Chapter” followed by the chapter number, skip a line, and type the chapter title on the following line; or
- Type the chapter number followed by the chapter title, all on the same line.

You may use a font size of up to 36 points for the chapter title.

1.4.2 Section Headings

You may use a font size of up to 24 points for section headings. Type the chapter number and section number before the section title.
1.4.3 Subsection Headings

You may use a font size of up to 18 points for section headings. Type the chapter number, section number, and subsection number before the subsection title.

1.4.4 Headings for Divisions Smaller than Subsections

Use unnumbered headings for divisions smaller than subsections. You may use a font size of up to 14 points. Headings may be typed above or on the same line as the sections they label. You may use both styles within your thesis.

Run-in Headings. To the left is an example of a run-in heading. Notice that it is typed on the same line as the section that it labels. It may be used for divisions smaller than subsections.

1.5 Figures and Tables

Figures and tables must be referenced in the text by number. They must be numbered consecutively throughout each chapter, with the chapter number preceding each figure or table number. For example, the third figure in chapter 1 would be labeled Figure 1-3. You may either:

- Maintain one numbering sequence for figures and another for tables, and label figures with the word “Figure” and tables with the word “Table”; or
- Label both figures and tables with the word “Figure” and maintain one numbering sequence.
Place figures and tables as close to their references in the text as possible. Place a figure number and title below each figure (or table labeled as a figure). Place a table number and title above each table labeled as a table. In figures and tables, avoid using color and avoid text smaller than 10 points. Do not let figures or tables spill out into the margins. Figure 1 is an example figure.

![An Irrelevant Dragon](image_url)

**FIGURE 1-1. An Irrelevant Dragon**

1.6 Lists

You may include lettered, numbered, or bulleted lists in your thesis. Use consistent punctuation and capitalization throughout each list. Lists should be indented.

1.7 Footnotes and Endnotes

You may use footnotes or endnotes for brief notes that are not appropriate for the body of the text. Use either footnotes or endnotes consistently throughout your thesis. Position footnotes in 10 point type just above the bottom margin. Use a short horizontal rule to separate footnotes from the text. Position endnotes at the end of each chapter. Type endnotes using the same font size and justification as the body text. Single space within
each footnote or endnote; double-space between footnotes or endnotes. Footnotes and endnotes should be consecutively numbered.

1.8 Quotations

You must use quotation marks and parenthetical references to indicate words that are not your own. Put quotation marks around short quotes. Put long quotes in separate single spaced paragraphs, indented up to 1 inch from the left margin (these are called block quotations). Kate Turabian, editor of official publications and dissertation secretary at the University of Chicago for over 25 years, distinguishes short and long quotes as follows:

Short, direct prose quotations should be incorporated into the text of the paper and enclosed in double quotation marks: “One small step for man; one giant leap for mankind.” But in general a prose quotation of two or more sentences which at the same time runs to four or more lines of text in a paper should be set off from the text and indented in its entirety.... [8]

1.1 Equations

Equations may be set in-line with the text or numbered and placed in separate paragraphs. Use the same numbering style for equations as you would for figures and tables. Here is an example of an equation set in-line with a paragraph: \( E=mc^2 \) Here is an example equation placed in a separate paragraph:

\[
E=mc^2
\] (1-1)

Equation numbering and formatting should follow the usual convention of your discipline and be acceptable to your thesis committee.
Chapter 2

Parts of the Thesis

This chapter describes the components of a thesis. You need not include all components described here, but you must follow the prescribed order for the components you do include. Table 2-1 lists the required and optional components in the order that they should appear. Your thesis should include three main parts: the front matter, the text, and the back matter. Each of these parts is described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Part</th>
<th>Thesis Component</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Optional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Matter</td>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract Page</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copyright Page</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glossary or Nomenclature</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Chapters</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Back Matter</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>References</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short Title Page</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1 Front Matter

The front matter includes all material that appears before the beginning of the main text. Unless otherwise specified, use regular body text (defined in Chapter 1) on all front matter pages. Number pages with lower-case Roman numerals, centered just above the bottom margin. Begin each of the following sections on a new page.

2.1.1 Title Page

Format the title page precisely like the title page of this document is formatted: include a 1.5-inch left margin, a 1-inch top margin, a 1-inch right margin, and a 1-inch bottom margin. Use a 12- or 14-point regular Times Roman or Times New Roman font on this page. If you are writing a dissertation, substitute the word ‘dissertation’ wherever the word ‘thesis’ appears in this document. The date on the title page should reflect the month and year the degree will be awarded and should be one of the following months: December, May, or August. Do not number this page or include it in your page count.

2.1.2 Abstract Page

The abstract must be 350 words or fewer. Format the abstract page just like the abstract page to this document. Do not number this page, but count it in your page count.

2.1.3 Copyright Page

Include a copyright page only if you plan to copyright your thesis. The copyright page should be an unnumbered page immediately following the title page. It should include three lines, centered on the page with regular body text font and spacing. The first line should read “copyright by.” The second line should contain your full name. The third line
should contain the year the degree is to be awarded. Do not number this page, but count it in your page count. Note, if you are an MS candidate and would like to copyright your thesis, you must make all arrangements for copyright, independent of the Dean’s office.

2.1.4 Dedication

The dedication page is optional. If you decide to include a dedication, make it short and center it on the page. Do not number this page, but count it in your page count.

2.1.5 Table of Contents

The table of contents must include the page numbers of all chapters and sections of your thesis. In addition, it may include the page numbers of all subsections. It must also include the page numbers of all front and back matter elements, unless otherwise specified. Chapter titles should appear flush left, section headings may be indented up to 0.5 inch, and subsection headings may be indented up to 1 inch. Chapter titles may be typed in plain or bold font. All titles and headings must be followed by a dot leader and a page number. The word “Contents” must appear in chapter title style at the top of the age. If possible, use your word processor’s built in table of contents generator to create the table of contents.

2.1.6 List of Tables

Include a list of tables only if your thesis actually contains tables. Format the list of tables the same way the table of contents is formatted, but put the word “Tables” in the heading.
2.1.7 List of Figures

Include a list of figures only if your thesis actually contains figures. Format the list of figures the same way the table of contents is formatted, but put the word “Figures” in the heading.

2.1.8 List of Abbreviations

Include a list of abbreviations only if you use abbreviations that are not common in your field.\(^1\) Arrange the list alphabetically. Type the word “List of Abbreviations” in chapter title style at the top of the page.

2.1.9 Glossary or Nomenclature

Include a glossary or nomenclature section only if your thesis contains technical words that are not commonly used by people in your field. Type the word “Glossary” or “Nomenclature” in chapter title style at the top of the page. The glossary or nomenclature section should consist of an alphabetized list of words, phrases, or acronyms and their definitions.

2.1.10 Acknowledgments

An acknowledgments section is optional. If you include an acknowledgments section, use it to thank those who supported your research through contributions of time, money, or other resources. Type the word “Acknowledgments” in chapter title style at the top of the page.

---

\(^1\) No list of abbreviations, glossary, or acknowledgments is included in this mock thesis. Use the preface contained in this thesis as a formatting example.
page. If the acknowledgments fill more than one page, put the heading only on the first page.

2.1.11 Preface

A preface is optional. If you include a preface, use it to explain the motivation behind your work. You may also include acknowledgments in the preface. However, you should not include a preface if it contains nothing but acknowledgments — include an acknowledgments section instead. Format the preface the same way the acknowledgments section is formatted, but substitute the word “Preface” in the heading.

2.2 Text

The text part of the thesis should be divided into numbered chapters, sections, and subsections. Divisions smaller than subsections may be used, but they should not be numbered. Use Arabic numerals for numbering. Place Arabic page numbers just below the top margin and just to the left of the right margin.

2.3 Back Matter

Throughout the back matter, use the same page number formats as in the text section.

2.3.1 Appendices

Appendices may be used for including reference material that is too lengthy or inappropriate for the thesis text. If only one appendix is included, an appendix title is optional. If more than one appendix is included, each one should be titled and lettered. In
general, appendices should be formatted like chapters. However, they may be single
spaced or include photocopied material. If photocopied material is used, you must add
page numbers to it in the upper right corner. Put the page numbers in square brackets to
indicate that they are not part of the original document.

2.3.2 References

The reference section should follow the final appendix (or the conclusion of the text if
there are no appendices). Type the word “References” in chapter title format at the top of
the page. Single space within references and double space between them. More
information on formatting references is included in Chapter 3.

2.3.3 Vita

Your vita should include your name, relevant academic and professional achievements,
and current month and year. It may also include your date and place of birth,
publications, and professional society memberships. Your vita should be the last page of
your thesis.

2.3.4 Short Title Page

The short title page should be prepared as described in Appendix B.
Chapter 3

Citing References

In the References section at the end of your thesis, list references cited using the style recommended in The Chicago Manual of Style [9] or another style acceptable to your committee. Insert parenthetical references where the reference material is referred to in the text. This chapter explains how to format references according to The Chicago Manual of Style. If you use a different style, you should obtain the appropriate style rules. For example, most journals periodically print instructions for authors that include reference style rules.

3.1 Parenthetical References

References should be cited at the position in the text where they are noted. The Chicago Manual of Style [9] recommends two systems for citations. You may use either of these systems or an alternative system acceptable to your committee.

3.1.1 Author-Date System

In this system, the last name of the author and the year of publication appear in parentheses following the quoted text. If the reference is alphabetized in the References section by its editor, publisher, or organization, then the name it is alphabetized under is used in place of the author. Some examples follow:
• Single author: (Smith 1993)
• Two authors: (Jones and Yang 1991)
• Three authors: (Jones, Smith, and Yang 1984)
• Four or more authors: (Johnson et al. 1994)
• Organization as author: (Association for Computing Machinery 1989)
• Two works referenced in one sentence: (Black 1994; Smith 1993)

3.1.2 Numbered References

In this system, the reference number appears in square brackets following the quoted text. This system is used throughout this document.

3.2 Reference List

References should be listed in alphabetical order by the last name of the first author (or organization or publisher, if no author is given). If the numbered reference style is used, the reference list should obviously be numbered as well. Several example references are listed in this document’s reference list. Most of these references are taken from *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* [8].
Appendix A

The English Language and Other Confusing Things

While this guide answers most questions about how to format a thesis, it does not address questions about English grammar, use of abbreviations, punctuation, spelling, and other confusing subjects. Students should obtain a dictionary and a style or grammar book to refer to as questions arise. The dictionary is important because most electronic spelling checkers are not complete and do not contain definitions. (You may also need to refer to some of the references you cite for the spelling of technical terms.) The grammar or style book is useful for checking grammar and punctuation rules. A good style manual contains information about correct English usage as well as advice for preparing a manuscript. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* [8] is one such concise and inexpensive manual based on the lengthy and more expensive *Chicago Manual of Style* [7]. The Elements of Style is another good style manual.

The following rules will help you avoid three mistakes frequently made by students:

- Hyphenated words must begin and end on the same page.
- When a page break falls in the middle of a paragraph, at least two lines of text from that paragraph must appear on the second page.
- At least one line of text from a section or subsection must appear on the same page as the title of that section or subsection.
Appendix B

Procedures and Deadlines

**Deadlines:** When you believe you will complete all requirements by the end of the current semester, you should consult with the Thesis and Dissertation Advisor in Lopata Hall, Room 324, to determine the deadline for completion of your file and for receipt of your thesis or dissertation copies. The deadlines are ironclad: no exceptions will be made. Note that the deadline printed in the course schedule and posted outside Lopata 324 refers to the date by which the final version of all theses and dissertations must be approved by the Thesis and Dissertation Advisor. The Advisor must receive all theses and dissertations at least ten working days prior to this deadline so the approval process can be completed.

**Oral Examination.** Each member of the oral examining committee must be given a copy of the thesis or dissertation, in final form, in sufficient time to study it before the oral examination. Members of the examining committee have the right to request rescheduling of the examination if these copies are not made available to them at least one week in advance of the scheduled examination date. Copier paper may be used for these preliminary copies.

**Final Copies.** After the oral defense, final copies of the thesis or dissertation approved by the examination committee and department are to be distributed as follows, on or before the date stated in the current academic calendar. All final copies must be printed single sided on high-quality, 8.5 x 11 inch white paper, minimum 20-pound weight.
The student should submit to the Sever Institute (Lopata 324):

- Two copies of the doctoral dissertation (or two copies of the magisterial thesis), each placed in a separate manila envelope with a copy of the title page attached.
- A loose sheet containing (1) a short title of 35 letters or less (including spaces), (2) the author’s last name, (3) the degree, and (4) the year of its award, centered on the page and punctuated as in the following example:

  Short Title: Proper Format of Theses  Student, M.S. 2005

- One additional copy of the dissertation abstract (dissertations only), typed double spaced, for publication in *Dissertation Abstracts*.
- A loose copy of the dissertation title page (dissertations only) for the microfilming contract.
- The original and a photocopy of the University Microfilms Inc. contract (dissertations only). If a copyright is desired, attach a certified check, cashier’s check, or money order for the current price listed in the University Microfilms contract. Personal checks are not accepted. The microfilming contracts are available in Lopata 324. Note that the check or money order should not have an expiration date.

The student should also submit one copy of the thesis or dissertation to his or her advisor and one copy to his or her department (or departments if the degree is a joint degree).
Appendix C

Thesis Format Checklist

Please fill out this form and submit it to the Thesis and Dissertation Advisor in Lopata Hall, Room 324, when you submit your thesis.

Author’s Name: ______________________________________________

Title page font: ___ 12 point ___14 point

Table of contents chapter title font: ____plain ____bold

First level table of contents indentation (0 to 0.5 inch): ___________

Second level table of contents indentation (0 to 1 inch): ___________

Body text font: ___10 point ___11 point ___12 point

Body text line spacing: ___ 1.5 ___2

Body text justification: ___ left ___full

Paragraph indentation (0 to 0.5 inch): ___________

Chapter title position (1.5 to 3 inches below top edge): ___________

Chapter title style: ___with word “Chapter” ___without word “Chapter”

Chapter title: ____ (10 to 36 point) ___ plain ___ bold

____ centered ___ left justified

Section heading: ____ (10 to 24 point) ___ plain ___ bold

____ centered ___ left justified

Subsection heading: ____ (10 to 18 point) ___ plain ___ bold

____ centered ___ left justified

Unnumbered heading: ____ (10 to 14 point) ___ plain ___ bold

____ centered ___ left justified

Label tables as: ___Table ___ Figure

Parenthetical reference style: ________________________________________________

Reference list style: __________________________________________________________
References


