ELEMENTS OF A THESIS

A traditional Master’s thesis contains the elements described below and should be the length and quality of a publishable monograph or journal article in your area of study. The key elements are briefly described as follows:

1. **Cover Page**: Title of the thesis and the author’s name.
2. **Title Page**: Title of the thesis and the author’s name. Include a short statement indicating that the thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master’s degree in ____________________________.
3. **Signature Page**: A statement indicating that the thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master’s degree in ____________________________, with space for signatures by your principal and supporting academic advisors and your outside readers.
4. **Acknowledgments**: An optional personal statement.
5. **Table of Contents, List of Tables, and List of Figures**: A comprehensive listing of chapter headings, including all sub-headings and all tables and figures included in the text and appendices. Be sure to include a conveniently located table listing all abbreviations commonly used in your thesis.
6. **Abstract**: A one page, single-spaced summary of your thesis question, the method(s) used to address the question, your results, and your conclusion(s). You should examine several examples of abstracts from leading, peer-reviewed journals in your area of specialization to determine the expected level of detail, style and point of view. Your abstract is very important. A digital copy will be posted on international bulletin boards and included in the LRC webpage. Your abstract should enable readers from diverse backgrounds to decide whether they would like to obtain a digital copy of your thesis in order to read further.
7. **Body of the Thesis**: Includes Introduction, Background, Methods, Results, and Conclusion.
   - Introduction—should include a general overview of your thesis topic, including a general description of the organizational structure of your thesis.
   - Background section(s)—should include a review of the literature in your area of study, and/or the history of the problem under investigation. (In publication format, these sections are often combined).
   - Methods section—If your thesis topic involves collecting original natural or social science data, this section must completely describe and reference your sampling design, and data gathering and analytical methods. If your thesis relies upon secondary sources of data, this section should describe the origin and background of the data sufficient to enable a reader in your area of specialization to gauge the reliability of the information.
• Results: This is the key analytical portion of your thesis. This section(s) should typically include summaries of your data, and your analysis and interpretation of results within the context of your overall thesis question.

• Conclusion: This section should summarize your major observations and present your conclusions, including your recommendations for further study and/or solutions to your identified problem(s) where appropriate.

8. Bibliography: Alphabetized list of all published information referred to or relied upon in the body of the thesis. Should include relevant identifying information about interviews conducted as part of your research, i.e., name, affiliation, date of the interview, etc.

9. References and Footnotes: Research skills are a particularly important format for references or footnotes. You are strongly encouraged to adopt the format typically used in the published literature in your primary area of study. Note, however, that your advisor may pay special attention to your use of references and footnotes to make sure that: a) ideas, information and quotations cited in your thesis are properly attributed, and b) a reader would be able to easily relocate the cited information.