

Honors Thesis Template

Complete template for undergraduate honors thesis. Adaptable to any citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago).

TITLE PAGE

[Centered on page]

[Full Title of Your Honors Thesis:
Subtitle if Applicable]

An Honors Thesis Presented to the

[Department Name]

[University Name]

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Bachelor of [Arts/Science]
with Honors in [Major]

by

[Your Full Name]

[Month Year]

Thesis Advisor: [Advisor Name, Title]

APPROVAL PAGE

[Check if your university requires this]

This Honors Thesis by [Your Name] has been approved by:

[Advisor Name, Title], Thesis Advisor

[Second Reader Name, Title], Second Reader

[Honors Director Name], Director of Honors Program

Date: _____

ABSTRACT

[Page number: iii]

Abstract

[Write 150-250 words summarizing your thesis: research question, methods, key findings, conclusions. Single paragraph.]

Keywords: [3-5 keywords]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[Page number: iv]

Acknowledgments

[Thank your advisor, readers, research participants, funding sources, family. Keep to 1 page.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Page number: v]

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: [Title]	8
Chapter 2: [Title]	20
Chapter 3: [Title]	35
Chapter 4: [Title]	48
Conclusion	60
References / Works Cited / Bibliography	65
Appendix A: [Title]	72

LIST OF TABLES (if applicable)

List of Tables

Table	Page
1. [Title]	[page]
2. [Title]	[page]

LIST OF FIGURES (if applicable)

List of Figures

Figure	Page
1. [Title]	[page]
2. [Title]	[page]

INTRODUCTION

[Start Arabic page numbering: 1]

Introduction

[Opening paragraph: Hook readers with compelling context, establish significance of your topic.]

Background

[Provide necessary background for understanding your research. What's already known about this topic?]

Research Question/Thesis Statement

This thesis addresses the following question: [Your specific research question]

OR

This thesis argues that [Your central argument/claim].

Significance

[Why does this research matter? Who benefits from understanding this?]

This research contributes to [field] by [specific contribution]. Understanding [your topic] is important because [real-world relevance].

Scope and Limitations

This study focuses on [what you're examining—time period, population, geographic area, specific texts/cases].

Limitations include: - [Limitation 1] - [Limitation 2] - [Limitation 3]

Methodology Overview

[Brief description of your approach—will be detailed in methods chapter if applicable]

This thesis employs [research method/approach] to [what you're doing]. Data comes from [sources: archives, surveys, experiments, textual analysis, etc.].

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 examines [topic/argument].

Chapter 2 analyzes [topic/argument].

Chapter 3 explores [topic/argument].

Chapter 4 discusses [topic/argument].

The **Conclusion** synthesizes findings and suggests future research directions.

CHAPTER 1: [TITLE]

Chapter 1: [Descriptive Title in Title Case]

[Opening paragraph: Introduce what this chapter covers and how it relates to your thesis.]

[Section Heading]

[Main content of chapter organized by clear sections]

[For humanities: close reading of texts, historical analysis, theoretical framework]

[For sciences: literature review, theoretical background, previous research]

[For social sciences: theoretical framework, prior studies, conceptual model]

[Section Heading]

[Continue developing your argument or analysis]

[Include evidence: quotes, data, examples, case studies]

Summary

[Brief summary of chapter's main points and transition to next chapter]

CHAPTER 2: [TITLE]

Chapter 2: [Descriptive Title]

[For empirical research, this might be your Methodology chapter. For humanities, might be continued analysis/argument.]

Research Design (if empirical)

[Describe your methodological approach]

Type: [Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed/Archival/Textual Analysis]

Justification: [Why this approach is appropriate]

Sample/Sources

[Describe what you studied]

- Population/texts/archives examined
- Sample size or number of cases
- Selection criteria

Data Collection

[How you gathered information]

Materials/Instruments: [Surveys, interview protocols, archival sources, primary texts]

Procedures: [Step-by-step process]

Data Analysis

[How you analyzed findings]

[For quantitative: statistical methods]

[For qualitative: coding approach, thematic analysis]

[For humanities: analytical framework, close reading method]

Ethical Considerations (if applicable)

[IRB approval status, informed consent, confidentiality measures]

CHAPTER 3: [TITLE]

Chapter 3: [Results/Findings/Analysis—depending on your field]

[For empirical research: Present your findings objectively]

[For humanities: Continue developing your argument with evidence]

[Theme/Finding 1]

[Present evidence, data, or analysis]

[For sciences/social sciences: Include tables, figures, statistics]

Table 1. [Title]

[data]	[data]	[data]
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[For humanities: Textual evidence, quotes, close analysis]

[Theme/Finding 2]

[Continue presenting findings or developing argument]

[Theme/Finding 3]

[Additional evidence or analysis]

CHAPTER 4: [TITLE]

Chapter 4: [Discussion/Further Analysis—depending on your field]

[For empirical research: Interpret findings and connect to literature]

[For humanities: Conclude your analytical argument]

Interpretation of Findings

[What do your results mean?]

[How do they relate to existing scholarship?]

[What's surprising or confirms expectations?]

Implications

Theoretical: [How this advances understanding in your field]

Practical: [Real-world applications or relevance]

Limitations

[Be honest about constraints on your research]

Recommendations for Future Research

[What questions remain? What should scholars study next?]

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings

[Recap your main arguments/findings briefly]

Contribution to Field

[What does your thesis add to existing knowledge?]

This research contributes to [field] by [specific contribution]. The findings [what they demonstrate].

Broader Implications

[Zoom out: Why does this matter beyond your specific topic?]

Future Directions

[What questions does your research raise? Where should scholarship go next?]

Final Thoughts

[Closing reflection on significance of your work]

REFERENCES (APA) / WORKS CITED (MLA) / BIBLIOGRAPHY (Chicago)

[Choose format based on your field's requirements]

APA Format:

References

[Hanging indent, alphabetical by author]

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Year). Title of article. *Journal Name*, volume(issue), pages. <https://doi.org/xxxxx>

MLA Format:

Works Cited

[Hanging indent, alphabetical by author]

Author Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Journal Name*, vol. #, no. #, Year, pp. pages.

Chicago Format:

Bibliography

[Hanging indent, alphabetical by author]

Last Name, First Name. "Title of Article." *Journal Name* volume, no. issue (Year): pages.

APPENDIX A: [TITLE]

Appendix A: [Descriptive Title]

[Include supplementary materials:]

- Survey instruments
 - Interview questions
 - IRB approval letters
 - Consent forms
 - Additional data tables
 - Transcripts
 - Extended quotations
 - Technical details
-

APPENDIX B: [TITLE]

Appendix B: [Descriptive Title]

[Additional supporting materials]

FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Length

Typical honors thesis: 40-80 pages (double-spaced) - Sciences: 40-60 pages - Social Sciences: 50-70 pages - Humanities: 60-80 pages

Check your department's requirements

Format

- **Font:** 12-pt Times New Roman (or department preference)
- **Spacing:** Double-spaced body text
- **Margins:** 1 inch all sides
- **Page numbers:** Top right or bottom center
- **Paragraphs:** Indent 0.5 inches (or no indent with space between)

Front Matter

- Roman numerals (i, ii, iii) for front matter
- Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) starting with Introduction

Headings

Use consistent **hierarchy:** - **Chapter titles:** Bold, centered or left-aligned - **Major sections:** Bold - **Subsections:** Italics or bold

Citations

Follow your field's style guide consistently: - **Sciences/Social Sciences:** Usually APA - **Humanities:** Usually MLA or Chicago - **Check with your advisor**

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION OPTIONS

Option 1: Traditional Empirical Structure

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Methodology
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Option 2: Humanities/Argument Structure

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: [First major point]

- Chapter 2: [Second major point]
- Chapter 3: [Third major point]
- Chapter 4: [Fourth major point/counterarguments]
- Conclusion

Option 3: Hybrid/Flexible Structure

- Introduction
- Chapter 1: Background/Context/Theory
- Chapter 2: Analysis/Case Study 1
- Chapter 3: Analysis/Case Study 2
- Chapter 4: Synthesis/Implications
- Conclusion

Choose structure that best fits your research

WRITING TIMELINE (Typical Academic Year)

Fall Semester

- **September:** Finalize topic, complete IRB (if needed)
- **October:** Research/data collection, draft introduction
- **November:** Continue research, draft Chapter 1
- **December:** Draft Chapter 2

Spring Semester

- **January:** Complete data collection/research
- **February:** Draft Chapters 3-4
- **March:** Complete full draft, advisor review
- **April:** Revisions, proofreading, formatting
- **Early May:** Final submission, presentation/defense

Adjust based on your program's deadlines

DEFENSE/PRESENTATION PREPARATION

Many honors programs require a thesis defense or presentation.

Typical Format

- 15-20 minute presentation of research
- 10-15 minutes Q&A with committee
- Possible open Q&A with audience

Prepare

- Create slides summarizing key points
- Practice presentation multiple times
- Anticipate questions about methods, findings, implications
- Know limitations of your research
- Be ready to defend your conclusions

Common Questions

- Why is this topic important?
 - How did you choose this methodology?
 - What surprised you in your findings?
 - What are the limitations?
 - What would you do differently?
 - What's next for this research?
-

CHECKLIST BEFORE SUBMISSION

Content

- ☐ All required chapters complete
- ☐ Introduction clearly states thesis/question
- ☐ Each chapter flows logically to next
- ☐ Conclusion synthesizes findings
- ☐ All claims supported by evidence
- ☐ Citations for all sources used

Format

- ☐ Meets page length requirements
- ☐ Proper formatting (font, spacing, margins)
- ☐ Page numbers correct (Roman, then Arabic)
- ☐ Table of contents matches chapter titles/pages
- ☐ All tables/figures numbered and titled
- ☐ Consistent heading hierarchy

Citations

- ☐ All in-text citations have full references
- ☐ All references cited in text
- ☐ Citation style consistent throughout
- ☐ References formatted correctly
- ☐ No missing page numbers or dates

Front Matter

- ☐ Title page complete and formatted
- ☐ Abstract within word limit
- ☐ Acknowledgments included
- ☐ Table of contents accurate
- ☐ Lists of tables/figures (if applicable)

Final Steps

- ☐ Proofread entire document
- ☐ Spell-check completed
- ☐ Advisor approved final draft
- ☐ Required signatures obtained
- ☐ Submitted in correct format (PDF, print, etc.)
- ☐ Defense/presentation scheduled

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Start Early

Begin research **fall semester**, aim for complete draft by March.

Meet Regularly with Advisor

Weekly or biweekly meetings **keep** you on track and provide feedback.

Write as You Research

Don't wait until all research is done to start writing.

Get Feedback

Share **drafts** with advisor, peers, writing center.

Stay Organized

Keep detailed notes, organize sources, back up your work.

Be Realistic

Choose a manageable scope for one academic year.

Celebrate

Completing an honors thesis is a major achievement!

Template Complete. Adapt structure and citation style to your field.
Good luck!

