

A Guide to Writing the MA Thesis in English Language and Literature

مع الموافقة

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بالتكليف

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Lebanese University
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences
English Department

Title

Subtitle (If Any)

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's
Degree in English language and literature

Done by

Student's Name

Supervised by

Supervisor's Name

Rank

Academic Year

Committee Members

First Member's Name

Rank

Second Member's Name

Rank

BlankPage

Title of the thesis

Student's Name

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Dedication

(Optional)

Acknowledgement

Thanks are limited to the supervisor, the co-supervisor, the discussion committee, the Lebanese University and Faculty of Letters, and the people who facilitated the researcher's task.

Title of the Thesis

Student's Name

Abstract

An abstract summarizes, usually in one paragraph of 300 words or less, the major aspects of the entire paper in a prescribed sequence that includes: 1) the overall purpose of the study and the research problem(s) you investigated; 2) the basic design of the study; 3) major findings or trends found as a result of your analysis; and, 4) a brief summary of your interpretations and conclusions (according to <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/abstract>).

Keywords: list around five words

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List of Abbreviations

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List of Tables

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List of Figures

All figures found in the body of the thesis should be listed here in the below form. Whenever inserting any figure, add a caption to it. When done, go to references and select “insert Table of Figure” choosing from the option “a figure” or “a table.” The list will appear automatically here as below.

Figure 1. Brief description of the figure11

Definition of Terms

Define the terms to be used in the thesis.

Chapter I: Introduction

The aim of this guide is to provide a reference to Master students at the Lebanese University – Faculty of Arts and Humanities – while writing their research. This file is already formatted to help students with the content and layout of the thesis.

Before going into any research process, it is important that the student know how to choose his/her research topic, which is a new subject, or a topic requiring further research, a pilot approach based on observation, testing, analysis, comparison and conclusion. The research material to be dealt with must be proportional to the student's abilities and previous acquisitions of information on the topic. He/she also has to be ethical, starting with the qualities he/she must have at the personal level, which is the desire to research along with systematic scrutiny, objectivity and honesty.

Therefore, the researcher must respect the ethics of the research based on ensuring the validity of the information he/she quotes to present in his/her research to reach certain results, away from plagiarism, with due respect to intellectual property rights, and with strict adherence to the accuracy of documentation and scientific honesty.

The thesis consists, in general, of three main sections: the title page, the introductory pages, followed by the pages of the tables and forms, the body of the thesis, and the final pages containing the reference pages and the appendixes.

As to plagiarism, the percentage of **similarity** with other sources must not exceed 15% of the total work provided that the quotation rate does not exceed 5% of the single source, stressing the need to document these quotations. The number of pages of the Master's thesis is

around 80 pages for Research Track and 60 pages for Professional track, excluding bibliography and appendices.

In one paragraph, introduce this chapter.

1. 1. Overview

Introduce the topic of the thesis and present any theoretical background in around 2 to 3 pages (for linguistic track).

1. 2. Statement of the Problem

Describe clearly and concisely the problem that this study intends to bridge (a page or so). Address a current topic or a topic with scientific addition, providing benefit to the community.

Statement of the problem or the thesis statement is the focal point of the research and describes the issue or issues to be addressed. It provides the context for the research study and generates the questions the researcher needs to answer. The study should attempt to solve this problem and present it through a new and different approach that benefits future scientific research.

1. 3. Purpose of the Study

Identify the purpose of the study and the objectives of choosing this topic. It tends to bridge the gap mentioned in the statement of the problem (a page or so).

1. 4. Significance of the Study

Indicate the significance of choosing such a topic and the value of researching it (a page or so). The significance of the study includes the addition the study provides in terms of knowledge and the benefits to society (psychological, social, educational, economic...). It sheds light on the original aspect in the thesis.

1. 5. Research Questions

The research questions are based on the statement of the problem. They should be specific, relevant and time bound. They guide the flow of the thesis, thus, directing the search process towards a possible solution to the problem. The research questions determine the “what”, “how”, “why”, “when” or “where” (2 to 4 questions are enough).

1. 6. Hypotheses of the Study

(For the Linguistic track and the Professional Project only)

The hypotheses are statements that can be either proved or disproved. They are in direct link to the problem and research questions.

1. 7. Structure of the Thesis

Describe the chapters of the thesis and the contents of each (a page or so).

Chapter II. Literature Review

Write a paragraph introducing this chapter and its content. This paragraph guides the reader to understand the flow of this review.

The purpose of this section is to provide the justification for the research and to highlight the contribution of the researcher. It covers what has been done on the topic in the parameters of the proposed theory and the research questions proposed. The student should not only present what critics have said about the topic, but respond to what has been said about it. The literature review should not provide a list of authors, their works or ideas, but must be a critical evaluation of those authors' works and their significance to the study. Finally, the researcher has to identify the gaps that are missing in the aforementioned body of criticism and determine how to bridge them.

While writing the Literature Review, you need to avoid plagiarism. This can be achieved in four ways: paraphrasing (rephrasing what the researcher has learned from the reference in his/her language while preserving basic meaning), quoting (copying exact words from the reference using quotation marks), copying (of drawings, illustrations, data, and specialized images while respecting copyright, and obtaining the necessary permissions) and summarizing. When using these four ways, you need to use in-text citation.

2.1. Subheading

Text

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exttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttext

2.1.1. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

When copying an extending quotation (longer than 3 lines), it is placed in this form without using quotation marks. You supply in-text citation according to the documentation format used (APA or MLA) as follows (author's last name, year of publication: page number).

Text

[illegible]

2.1.2. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

2.1.3. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

Text text	Text text	Text text	Text text
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Table 1. Brief description of the table

2.2. Subheading

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text
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2. 2. 1. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

2.2.2. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

2. 2. 3. Title of the part

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[illegible]

2.3. Subheading

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2.3.1. Title of the part

Text¹texttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttext
exttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttexttext

2.3.2. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

¹ Footnotes are added to add extra information, to clarify an idea, to provide a translation or the original text of a translation, etc.

2.4.3. Title of the part

Text

[illegible]

Add more subheadings if there is any need.

Add (a) wrap-up paragraph(s) to the Literature Review, summarizing the studies and ideas tackled, and pave the way for the next chapter.

Chapter III: Methodology of Research

Write a paragraph introducing this chapter and its content.

It is necessary to determine the method(s) used and the reason behind choosing this (these) method(s) that tend(s) to answer the research questions. This chapter presents the tools that will be used by the researcher in the collection of data and the analysis of the material. It usually has but not limited to the following subtitles.

3.1. Research Design

Introduce the content of this section.

3.1.1. The Type of Research

Present the theoretical framework and identify the type of research: qualitative, quantitative or mixed, case study, comparative, etc. Then explain why this type is chosen, what this type entails, and what adaptations, if any, are made.

3.1.2. Time and Place of the study

You can add other subheadings or sub-sections to elaborate on any idea or notion related to the method and methodology used (for the Linguistics Research and the Professional Project).

3.2. Sample/Population/Corpus of the Study

Introduce the content of this section (for the Linguistics Research and the Professional Project).

3.2.1. The Method Used for Selecting Sample/Population/Corpus

Identify clearly the method(s) of selecting Sample/Population/Corpus and the reasons for choosing the method(s) to serve in answering the research questions. Make sure the method(s) attain a representative Sample/Population/Corpus.

3.2.2. The Sample/Population/Corpus

Describe the Sample/Population/Corpus in details. Add any figures or tables to clarify the Sample/Population/Corpus.

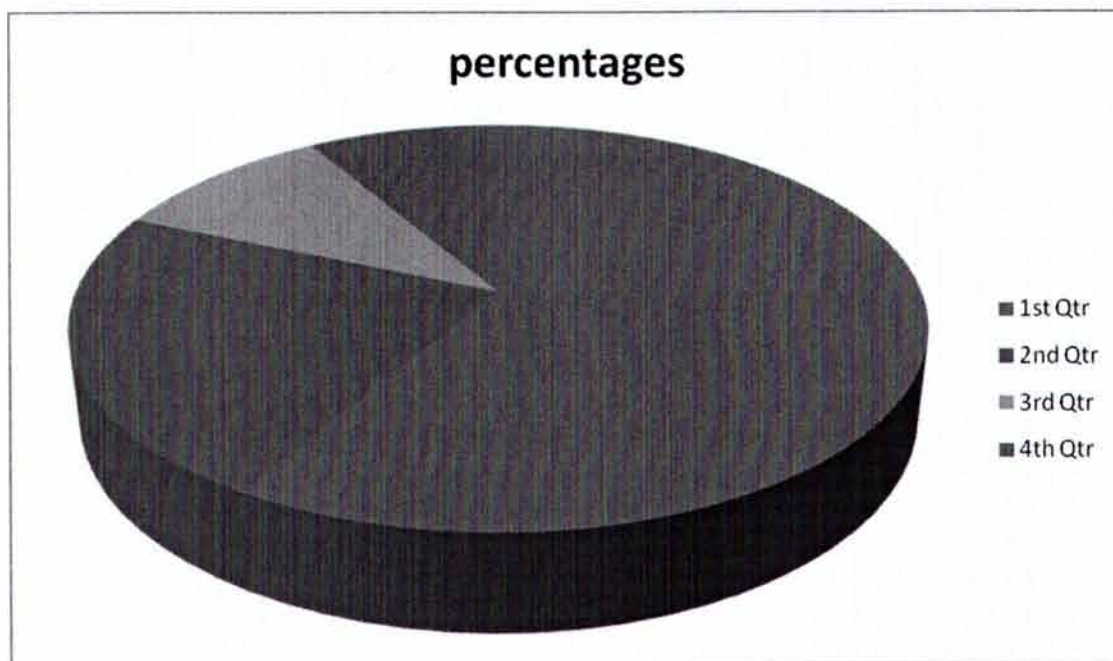


Figure 1. *Brief description of the figure*

3.2.3. Any Relevant Idea on the Sample/Population/Corpus (If Any)

Text

[illegible]

3.3. Instruments of the Study

Describe the instruments used in relation to the research questions to collect data, such as interviews, behavior observation checklists, performance tests, questionnaires, etc. and verify your choice of choosing each (For the Linguistics Research and the Professional Project).

3.3.1. The First Instrument and its Validity

Describe the instrument and its source. Explain its validity and reliability in rendering accurate results.

3.3.2. The Second Instrument and its Validity

Describe the instrument and its source. Explain its validity and reliability in rendering accurate results.

3.3.3. The Third Instrument and its Validity

Describe the instrument and its source. Explain its validity and reliability in rendering accurate results. You can either add or delete instruments.

3.5.2. The Procedure by Criteria 2

Text

[illegible]

3.5.3. The Procedure by Criteria 3

You can always add more subheadings to clarify the procedure.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Describe any ethical considerations relevant to the study. It could be a consent form to get access to results or permission to do something.

3.7. Data Collection and Statistical Treatment

Describe what you use to analyze the data collected. It could be SPSS or any other statistical procedure (for the Linguistic Track and the Professional Project).

Add a wrap-up paragraph to this chapter and pave the way for the next.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

In one paragraph, describe this section and its content.

The basic purpose of data analysis, whether quantitative or qualitative, is to summarize a large body of information, to answer research questions, to test the validity of hypotheses, to investigate potential problems, and to examine the expected estimates. The results are usually presented in Chapter 3, interpreted, and discussed in Chapter 4. The sub-headings suggested can be altered following the specificity of the research.

4. 1. Analysis of the Results

The analysis of the results is divided into sub-sections according to the specific criteria of the research. It could be according to instruments, to type of research (qualitative and quantitative, comparative), themes of the research, etc.

Remember to use graphs to facilitate the analysis.

4.1.1. Analysis of Theme/Criteria/Instrument

Add more sub-sections as needed.

4. 2. Discussing the Findings

Discuss findings especially those that do not show statistical significance, and analyze whether this is due to weak statistical power, which can mask a real difference or correlation.

Discuss clearly the choice of one specific SPSS feature rather than another and its effect in revealing any significance of the results.

4.2.1. Discussion

Always link the findings to the literature review.

4.2.2. Discussion

Add more sub-sections as needed.

4. 3. Testing the Hypotheses

Describe the purpose of this part (for the Linguistics Research and the Professional Project).

4.3.1. Testing the First Hypothesis

Write the hypothesis and mention the instrument(s) used to test it. Then state the result of the test.

4.3.2. Testing the Second Hypothesis

Add more sub-sections as needed.

4. 4. Answering the Research Questions

Based on the result of the hypotheses, the research questions are answered.

4.4.1. Answering the First Question

Rewrite the question here and answer providing proper verification.

4.4.2. Answering the Second Question

Add more sub-headings as needed.

Add (a) wrap-up paragraph(s) summarizing this chapter and pave the way for the next chapter.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Add a paragraph introducing this chapter.

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions drawn and derived. The conclusion of the research is the most important part of it because it shows the results reached by the researcher with a short and succinct scientific statement. It is an authentic scientific contribution attributed to the researcher, the clear evidence of the value of research and study, and the real mirror of the level of the researcher and the amount of understanding of the scientific material, examined and presented. Since the last thing that touches the eyes of the reader, it must be tightly thought, styled, and arranged so that the last impression has a profound impact on the reader.

5.1. Summary

This section is a thorough overview of the research presented straightforwardly and clearly. The results should be discussed and interpreted in the light of a range of things: the overall results of the present study, the relevant literature, the theoretical/conceptual framework used, the current study and previous studies. How do the results of the current study conform, or vary, with previous literature? How does this affect feeds? The wording of the extracts must be consistent with the strength of the supporting evidence. Some conclusions can be formulated in a decisive and confident language, while other conclusions require a language of probability, possibility, or speculative.

5.2. Limitations of the Study

Limitations can be in terms of duration of the research, place, population, sample size, instruments, or any other area in this research.

5.3. Recommendations and Implications for Further Research

The section presents the recommendations of the researcher based on the results of the current study and the relevant literature, taking into consideration the limits of the present study and previous studies. Recommendations may include the proposal to make adjustments to relevant theories, practices or policies. They may include suggestions for future research: emerging problems, new research questions raised by the study findings, promising conceptual frameworks, useful or even useless methods and should be avoided, etc.

5.4. Differences between the Professional Project and the Research Thesis

Criteria	Project	Research Thesis
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is a culminating written product (can be a kit, model, etc....)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is a culminating written research paper○ Is a systematic study of a significant problem
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is often more practical, should show originality, critical thinking, appropriate organization and format.○ Should be accurate and thoroughly documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is driven by critical inquiry; typically leads to empirical investigation, or theory testing, through established quantitative and/or qualitative methods.○ Should be accurate and thoroughly documented.
Emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is on scholarly thinking and critical analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Is more theoretical; rigorously tests the effectiveness of a proposed intervention using a data driven approach.

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To further the knowledge of the student in an area of personal interest, to further the interests or knowledge of a group, or to provide tools for educational/research purposes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To further students' knowledge in an area of research inquiry such as academic or social phenomena and engage them in rigorous research skills
Format	<p>May be, but is certainly not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a critical review in an area of special interest to the student, (for example, a model of intervention), including a review of theoretical foundations, value base, evidence regarding its effectiveness, etc. ○ a resource, handbook, videotape, workshop or other kind of training module, developed from a sound literature review, and designed to transmit knowledge and disseminate information ○ a program proposal or a program evaluation ○ an empirical study (qualitative or quantitative) which is exploratory or pilot in nature, with a relatively small number of subjects, or with an unrepresentative sample. ○ a needs assessment 	<p>May be, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a critical review which leads to theory building or theory testing. ○ a critical review which leads to the development of a hypothesis, and the testing of that hypothesis. ○ the development of an intervention, followed by the testing or evaluation of that intervention. ○ the design of a program, and the evaluation of the program's effectiveness. ○ an empirical study, using quantitative and/or qualitative methods, which follows a rigorous methodological approach ○ a needs assessment which leads to a better understanding of the dynamics in various aspects of the field to disseminate this knowledge for future research
Length	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum of 15000 words excluding references and appendices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum of 25000 words excluding references and appendices.
More details	<p>In addition to the aforementioned items, a professional project contains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Evaluation of the project in the light of the theoretical and previous studies. ○ An accompanying essay that discusses the steps of the project, its implementation at the personal level, the hardships encountered and how the problems have been bridged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○

Table 2. Differences between the Professional Project and the research Thesis

References/Works Cited

At least 40 sources and references, selected among the most modern in the field of research. These sources should be ordered alphabetically. In the Linguistics and Professional theses, this part is called References and in the Literature one it is Works Cited.

All in-text citations should be accompanied by reference citations. Skipping any reference would be considered an act of plagiarism.

Below are examples of writing references in MLA and APA (6th edition):

Book by one author

MLA: Spraggins, Marianne. *Getting Ahead: A Survival Guide for Black Women in Business*. Indianapolis: Wiley, 2009. Print.

APA: Spraggins, M. (2009). *Getting ahead: A survival guide for black women in business*. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley.

Book by two authors

MLA: Wu, Melody, and Trent Tucker. *China's Role in the Global Economy*. Denver: Tradevision Press, 2011. Print.

APA: Wu, M. & Tucker, T. (2011). *China's Role in the Global Economy*. Denver, CO: Tradevision Press.

Book by three authors

MLA: Mallahi, Kamel, Kevin Morrell, and Geoffrey Wood. *The Ethical Business: Challenges and Controversies*. New York: Macmillan, 2010. Print.

APA: Kamel, K., Morrell, K., & Wood, G. (2010). *The ethical business: Challenges and controversies*. New York, NY: Macmillan.

Book by four or more authors

MLA: Berkowitz, Harry A., et al. *Collaborating Effectively and Efficiently: A Case Study*. Los Angeles: Collaborative Technology, 2010. Print.

APA: Berkowitz, H. A., Barner, P. L., Choi, D.G., & Osler, T. O. (2010). *Collaborating*

effectively and efficiently: A case study. Los Angeles CA: Collaborative Technology.

Book published online

MLA: Marcus, Bonnie. *Advancing Women's leadership.* Head over Heels: Women's Business Radio, 2009. Web. 10 Mar. 2011.

APA: Marcus, B. (2009). *Advancing women's leadership* [Adobe Digital Editions version]. Retrieved from <http://womensuccesscoaching.com/wp-content/>

Edited collection of essays

MLA: Chavez, lisle, and Ted Nowaski, eds. *Urban Planning and People Oriented Space.* Boston: Academic P, 2011. Print.

APA: Chavez, l., & Nowaski T. (Eds.). (2011). *Urban planning and people oriented space.* Boston, MA: Academic Press.

Work included in a collection of essays

MLA: Papademos, Lucas. "The Effects of Globalization on Inflation, Liquidity, and Monetary Policy." *International Dimensions of Monetary Policy.* Ed. Jordi Gali and Mark Gertler. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2010. 593-608. Print.

APA: Papademos, L. (2010). "The effects of globalization on inflation, Liquidity, and monetary policy." In J. Gali & M. Gertler (Eds.), *International Dimensions of Monetary Policy.* (pp. 593-608). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Book by a corporate author

MLA: Computer Literacy Foundation. *PCs in the Classroom.* 3rd ed. New York: Technology P, 2008. Print.

APA: Computer Literacy Foundation. (2008). *PCs in the classroom.* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Technology Press.

Article in a professional journal

MLA: Fieseler, Christian, Matthes Fleck, and Miriam Meckel. "Corporate Social Responsibility in the Blogosphere." *Journal of Business Ethics* 91.4 (2010): 599-614.

Print.

APA: Fieseler, C., Fleck, M. & Meckel, M. (2010). Corporate social responsibility in the blogosphere. *Journal of Business Ethics* 91(4), 599-614.

Article in a print magazine

MLA: Kurowska, Teresa. "Is the Boss Watching Every Keystroke You Make?" *Today's Workplace* Oct. 2011: 47+. Print.

APA: Kurowska, T. (2010, October). Is the boss watching every keystroke you make? *Today's Workplace*, 47, 72-73.

Article in a professional online journal

MLA: Mayer, Gloria, and Michael Vallaire. "Enhancing Written Communication to Address Health Literacy." *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* 14.3 (2009). Web. 30 Sept. 2009.

APA: Mayer, G., & Vallaire, M. (2009, September 30). Enhancing writer communication to address health literacy. *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 14(3).
doi:10.3912/OJIN.Vol14No02ManOs

Article in a print newspaper

MLA: Korkki, Phyllis. "Finding a Job by Starting a Business." *New York Times* 31 Jan. 2010: BU2. Print.

APA: Korkki, P. (2010, January 31). Finding a job by starting a business. *New York Times*, p. BU2.

Online encyclopedia article

MLA: Kling, Arnold. "International Trade." *Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*. 2nd ed. Library of Economics and Liberty, 2008. Web. 27 Mar. 2010.

APA: Kling, A. (2008). International trade. In *Concise encyclopedia of economics* (2nd ed). Retrieved from <http://www.econlib.org/library/CEE.html>

Online unsigned encyclopedia article

MLA: "Inflation." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2010. Web. 27 Mar. 2010.

APA: Inflation. (2010). In *Encyclopedia Britannica online*. Retrieved from <http://britannica.com/>

Unsigned article in a print magazine or newspaper

MLA: "The Green Machine." *Economist* 13 Mar. 2010: 7-8. Print.

APA: The green machine. (2010, March 13). *Economist*, 7-8.

Article in an online newspaper or magazine

MLA: Zakaria Fareed. "'Swing for the Fences': Energy Secretary Steven Chu on Boosting Technology." *The Washington Post*. The Washington Post Company, 29 Mar. 2010. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

APA: Zalar, F. (2010, March 29). 'Swing for the fences': Energy secretary Steven Chu on boosting technology. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp->

Government documents

MLA: United States Middle Class Task Force. *Green Jobs: A Pathway to a Strong Middle Class*. Washington: GPO, 2009. Print

APA: United States Middle Class Task Force. (2009). *Green jobs: A pathway to a strong middle class* (Publication No.085-K-02). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Website

MLA: Home page. Natl. Council of La Raza, 2010. Web. 28 Mar. 2010.

APA: When referencing an *entire* website, APA style is to provide the URL in the body of the text and not list it in the References Section.

Radio

MLA: *Serious Money*. Hosts Renee Janson and Jason Ayala. Financial News Radio. KFNN, Phoenix, 7 Apr. 2010. Radio.

APA: Janson, R. (Host), & Ayala, J (Host). (2010, April 7). *Serious Money*. Phoenix, AZ: KFNN Financial News Radio.

Television

MLA: "No Frills Business Travel." Prod. Jeff Nathenson. *Business Traveler*. CNN. 14Apr. 2010. Television.

APA: Nathenson, J. (Producer). (2010, April 14). No frills business travel [Television series episode]. In *Business Traveler*. Atlanta, GA: CNN.

Podcast

MLA: Gunther, Marc, prod. "Coca-Cola's New PlantBottle Sows Path to Greener Packaging." Greenbiz Radio. Greener World Media, 1 Dec. 2009. Web. 28 Mar. 2010

APA: Gunther, M. (Producer). (2009, December 1). Coca-Cola's New PlantBottle Sows Path to Greener Packaging [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from <http://www.greenbiz.com/podcast/2009/12/01/coca-cola-new-plantbottle-sows-path-greener-packaging>

Business Blog

MLA: Musgrove, Marc. "The Evolution of Cisco's Smart + Connected Communities to Colorado." *The Platform: Opinions and Insights from Cisco*. Cisco, 24 Mar. 2010. Web. 31 Mar. 2010.

APA: Musgrove, M. (2010, March 24). The evolution of Cisco's smart + connected communities to Colorado [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://blogs.cisco.com/news/comments/the_evolution_of_ciscos_smartconnected/

Personal interview

MLA: Alvarez, Jose. E-mail interview. 15 Oct. 2011.

APA: Interviews, conversations and presentations are not included in APA reference lists, but students must still cite them within their paper as follows:

(J. Alvarez, personal communication, October 15, 2011)

E-Mail correspondence

MLA: Teke, Cho-Martin. "Re: New Security Cameras." Message to the author. 3 July 2011.

E-mail.

APA: Treat as unpublished interview and cite parenthetically in the text; see "Personal Interview" above.

Appendices

The number of pages of the appendices does not exceed one third of the pages of the thesis. The section includes all the instruments (questionnaire, lesson plans, sample of the corpus...) used in the research, approvals related to copyright, consent forms, tools, charts, statistics, maps, etc. These appendices should be also mentioned in the research by their alphabetical number displayed here. Each appendix should be on a separate page.

Appendix B