

Writing Towards a Thesis Statement or Focused Research Question

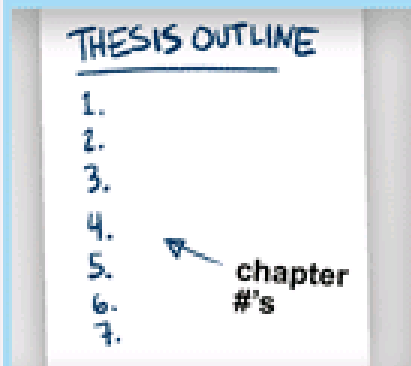
The University of Toledo
College of Graduate Studies
and The Writing Center

Fall 2010

WRITING YOUR THESIS OUTLINE

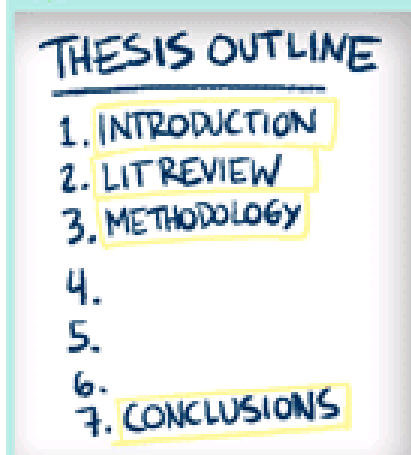
NOTHING SAYS "I'M ALMOST DONE" TO YOUR ADVISOR/ SPOUSE/PARENTS LIKE PRETENDING YOU HAVE A PLAN

STEP 1 Aim for a respectable number of chapters:



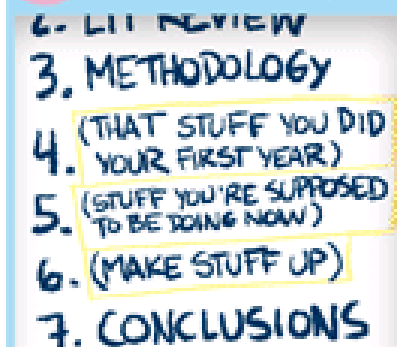
5 = "That's IT??"
6-7 = "Not bad"
8+ = "Are you crazy??"

STEP 2 Fill in the "freebies":



You're half way done!

STEP 3 Make up titles for the "meat" chapters:



(It'll be years before you actually have to work on that later chapter, and by then your thesis topic will have changed anyway)

STEP 4 Voilà! You just bought yourself another two years



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Sometimes laughter is the best medicine

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Overview

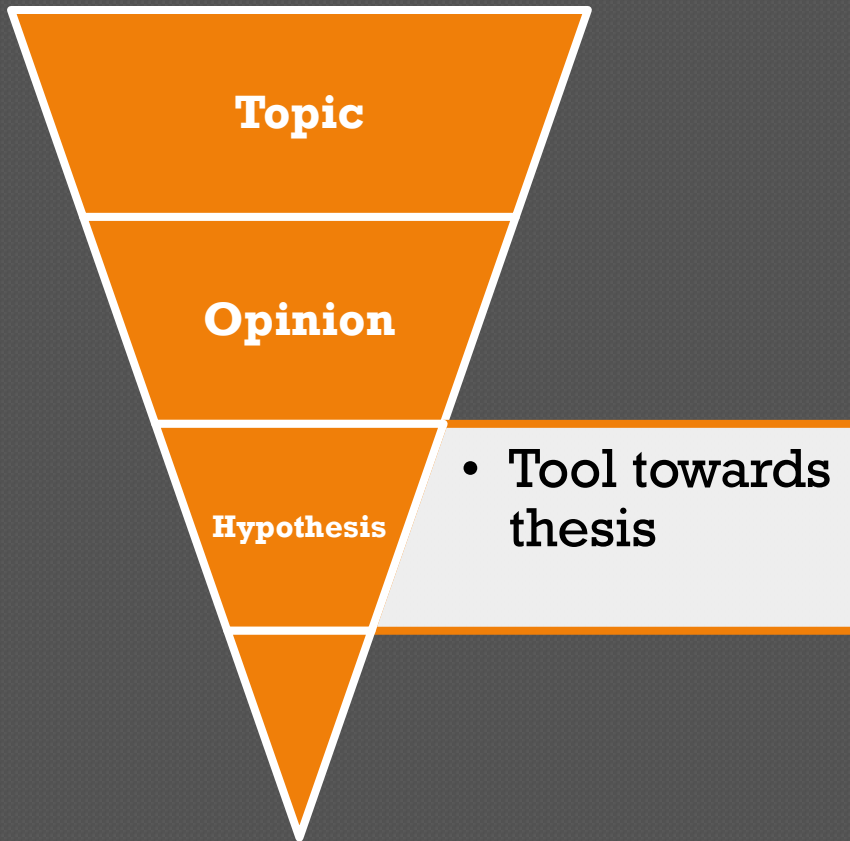
- ◉ Introductions
- ◉ Do you “have” a thesis yet?
- ◉ Writing as a tool of invention
- ◉ Three steps to “enter the conversation”
- ◉ Conceptualizing the project
- ◉ Scholarly Project Worksheet
- ◉ Recommended Resources

Introductions

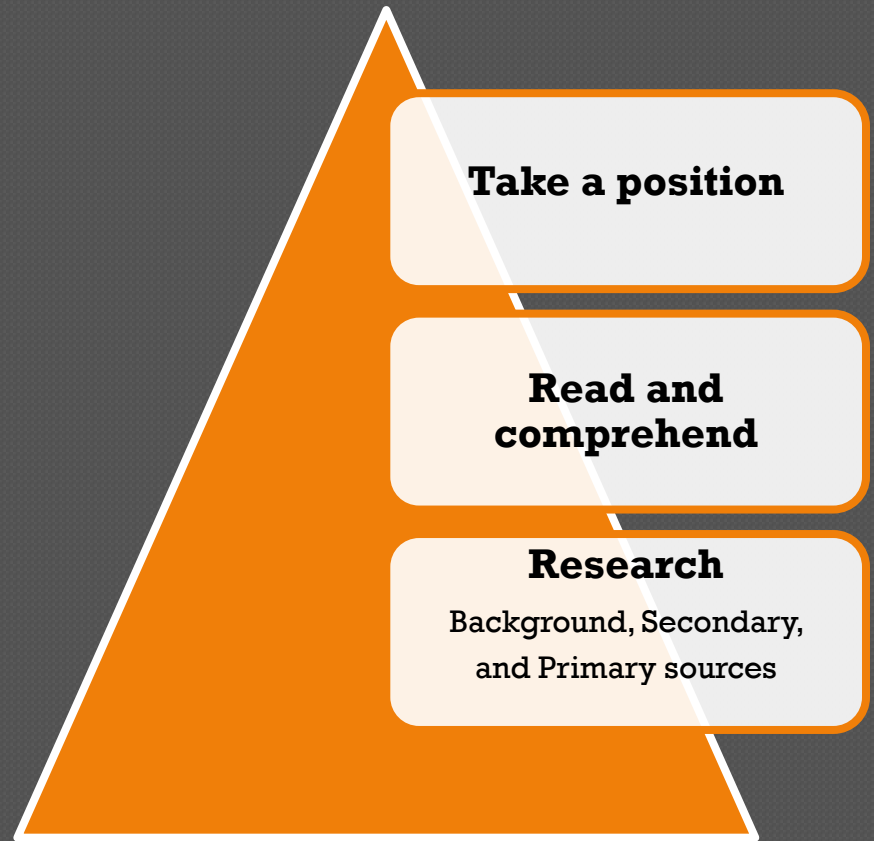
- ◉ Dr. Barbara Schneider
- ◉ Teri Green
- ◉ Workshop participants

Do you “have” a thesis yet?

“HAVING”



“STRUGGLING TOWARDS”



Writing as a Tool of Invention

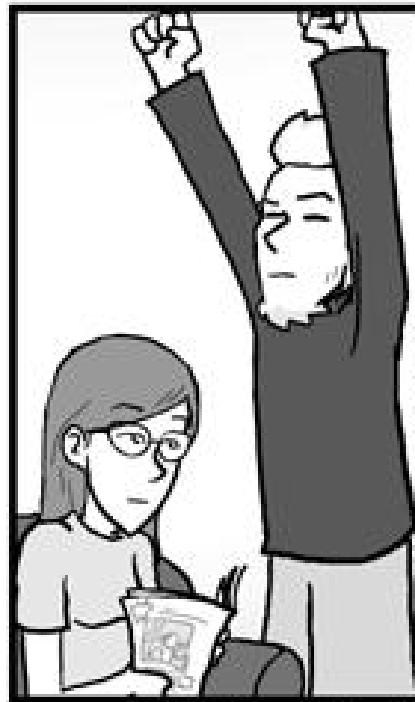
- Connections between texts
- Must respond to texts *in writing* to discover what they want to say
- All writers write until they figure out what they have to say

Three Steps to Enter the Conversation

- Establishing a territory
 - Includes Literature Review—laying out the field
- Establishing a niche
 - Your work “talks” to the field
- Occupying the niche
 - Position—how do you write your way into it?

Conceptualizing the Project

- What kind of project is it?
- Organization and structure
 - OhioETD
 - Handbook for the Preparation of Graduate Dissertations and Theses
- Planning and timelines
 - Visual and material



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You can do it!

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Scholarly Project Worksheet

○ Purpose:

- define and focus your ideas about your scholarly project
- refocus/redirect/expand your ideas as you engage in your project
- discuss your writing progress with your advisor, writing tutor, or colleague

Name
Genre
Title

Organizational
pattern?

Argument of each
chapter/section?

Topic?

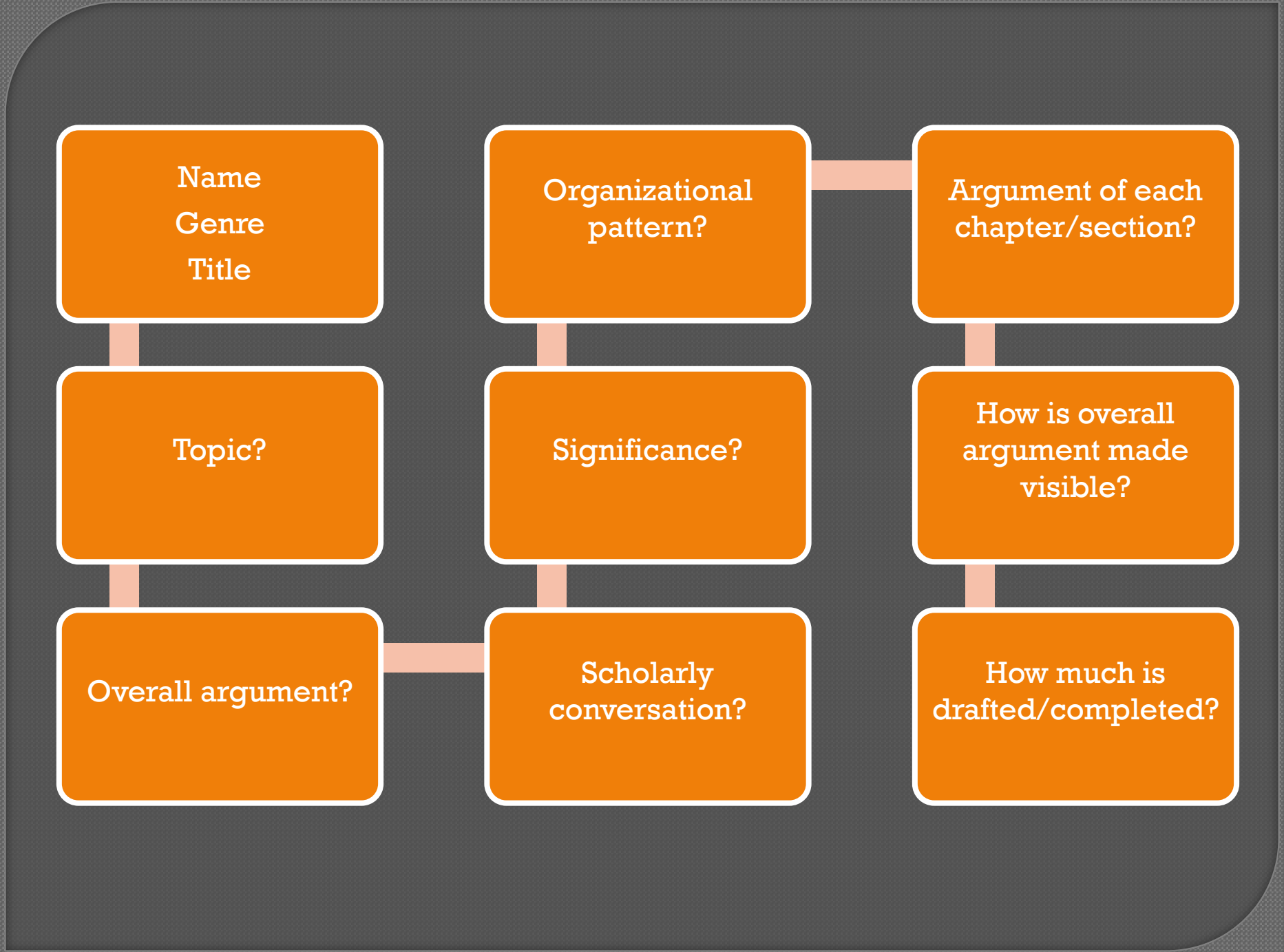
Significance?

How is overall
argument made
visible?

Overall argument?

Scholarly
conversation?

How much is
drafted/completed?



Recommended Resources

- ◉ U.T. Writing Center
- ◉ U.T. Libraries
- ◉ College of Graduate Studies
 - Writing in Graduate School Presentation
 - Writing Workshops
- ◉ Your advisor and committee members

Recommended Readings

- *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein
- *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, Essential Tasks and Skills, Second Edition* by John M. Swales and Christine B. Feak



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Santa *did* leave you writing resources

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References

Bhatia, V. K., (1993). *Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings*. New York: Longman.