

Overview of Traditional Five Chapter Format

NOTE: The following subheadings are suggestive only and apply to studies in the behavioral sciences. They are intended to provide an idea of the types of things that typically go in each chapter. Actual headings need to reflect the content in each section and subsection and should be consistent with the requirements of your department and committee.

“Typical” chapters	Basic idea behind each chapter
<p>Chapter 1 – Introduction/Problem Statement Sets up rationale and need for study Culmination of a brief intro about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ something that is missing in our knowledge ▶ a gap in theory ▶ a need to be resolved ▶ a question to be answered ▶ a model to be verified or tested ▶ a theory to be tested or applied <p>Basic conceptual framework that concludes with research goals, questions, or proposed model to be tested.</p>	<p>Overview – basic argument that leads to hunches, questions, or proposed models. May be in a statement or question format. In either case, this defines the general parameters for your research “problem.” The problem statement provides valid reasons for why the study is needed, why we should care about it. In essence, all of Chapter 1 is a problem statement. Think of the chapter as providing the basic background or context for the problem/issue to be resolved or explored, the theory to be tested.</p>
<p>Chapter 2 - Literature Review This chapter is a detailed expansion of the relevant references presented in Chapter 1. Use headings and subheadings as appropriate to identify different aspects of the review. Organize it into relevant topics or categories to support the argument in Chapter 1.</p>	<p>Background – context for questions or theoretical models. Use past tense for reporting results of past research. Use present tense for generally accepted “truths.” Include all relevant aspects. Discuss both positive and negative sides, if applicable.</p>
<p>Chapter 3 - Method Population and Sample Design Instruments (incl. reliability and validity) Procedures Data Analysis</p>	<p>Blueprint – model of details. Use future tense in the proposal and past tense in the dissertation or thesis. For the proposal, use past tense for any pilot work that is already done.</p>
<p>Chapter 4 - Results Participants or materials used Relevant subsections as dictated by research questions & what was done</p>	<p>Findings What the data say (results). What you proved or demonstrated. What you derived. Use past tense.</p>
<p>Chapter 5 - Summary, Conclusions, Implications Summary (of actual findings) Conclusions (relate back to literature) Implications for Research & for Practice</p>	<p>Ending message What the data mean (conclusions) and what they imply (implications). Use present tense for general statements about “reality.”</p>