The following information should be found on the title page:

- the title (e.g., ‘This is not going to have a happy ending’: Searching for new representations of Hollywood in David Fincher’s Se7en),
- the name of the writer,
- the name of the course or the type of paper (e.g., 682285A Bachelor’s Seminar and Thesis or Master’s Thesis), and
- the date of presentation or submission (e.g., Autumn 2018 for Master’s Thesis and October 14, 2018 for a seminar paper).

House style of English Philology:
Instructions for writers of research papers and theses

Name of writer
Name of course/Type of paper
English Philology
Faculty of Humanities
University of Oulu
Autumn 2018
The table of contents lists the headings of the numbered sections of the paper and the number of the page on which these are found. The title page, the page(s) on which the table of contents appears or any pages on which appendices appear are not numbered.

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Appendices
1 Abstract

The first part of your thesis should be an abstract. This should be written in both English and in either Finnish or Swedish (if one of these is your native language). Place the abstracts right after the cover page, before the table of contents. Do not add numbering to the headings.

The abstract can be thought of as an advertisement of, and a guide to, the contents of your thesis. It allows readers to decide if the thesis is useful for their purposes, and if they want to read further. It should thus be the first section in your thesis, but the last part you write. The abstract should fit in a single page (2000–2500 characters, spaces not included). It should also be clear, comprehensive, and well-written.

The abstract should inform your reader as clearly as possible of:

• the purpose of your research
• the methods and materials used in conducting your research
• the scope of your research
• the conclusions or results of your research
• any other essential information regarding your research

You abstract should consist of one or more clearly-organized paragraphs, not a mere list of contents or an assembly of disjointed sentences: it should be capable of working as a stand-alone text. It should summarize all of the important information in your report, but be written in such a way that the widest possible audience can read and understand it. You should thus avoid jargon and overly technical language as far as possible. Finally, as the abstract is the part of your thesis that will inevitably be read the most, you should be exceptionally rigorous in your editing and proofreading.
2 Research reports in English Philology

Studies in English Philology at the University of Oulu involve writing several research reports, including a bachelor’s thesis, a master’s seminar paper, and a master’s thesis. The following are general guidelines on how to write such reports; teachers and thesis examiners may have additional requirements. Students should abide by the recommended report length guidelines in terms of number of words, not necessarily number of pages.

In order to successfully complete all three levels of research report, students will need to explore and present research done on their particular topic. The library subject guides (http://libguides.oulu.fi/subjectguides) are very useful starting places for this sort of research. Exercise caution when consulting previous examples of student work (for example master’s theses), as structure, format, and indeed quality of such work is variable and cannot be taken as a reliable guide.

All research reports in English Philology must comply with good scientific practice. We are committed to observing the guidelines by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity on the responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (http://www.tenk.fi/en).

2.1 Bachelor’s thesis

The aims of the bachelor’s seminar are (1) to provide an introduction, through group work on relevant research topics, to the methodology, scholarly style, and formal conventions of a thesis in the discipline; and (2) to produce a thesis of around 25 pages (8,000 words) in the correct scholarly form on a research topic that is agreed on with the supervisor.

2.2 Master’s seminar paper

The aim of the master’s seminar is to foster the ability of students to define specific research questions and goals, to find appropriate methods to deal with the questions raised, and—through both speech and writing—to present the results of the research in a clear, consistent, and scholarly form. This involves the preparation of a research paper. Most seminar papers are around 25–30
pages (apx. 10,000 words) in length. The master’s seminar is a step towards the master’s thesis, emphasising an increased level of independent research. It is recommended that you choose a topic that can later be developed into a master’s thesis. However, the master’s seminar paper must be able to stand on its own as an independent piece of research.

2.3 Master’s thesis

Major students of English Philology will write a master’s thesis (also referred to as a pro gradu thesis) that demonstrates their ability to carry out independent research and present the research findings in a systematic and appropriate form on an approved topic in a field represented in English Philology. Students typically aim at writing around 70–80 pages (25,000–28,000 words), including a list of references, but excluding possible appendices.
3 Structure of a research report

There is no fixed structure for a research report. However, there are several general guidelines that can be followed. Broadly speaking, there are two main patterns for research reports, depending on the discipline within which you are working, and the type of research you are doing. These are the IMRD (or Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion) research report and the Thesis-led research report. In general, theses situated within, or using methodologies derived from disciplines such as linguistics or applied language studies use the IMRD format, while theses situated within disciplines such as literature, film studies, and history tend to use a thesis-led structure. Thus one of the first, and most important, decisions you will have to make is which structure best suits your particular research project. To make this decision, you will need to consider both the discipline within which you are working and your particular approach. Once you have made this decision, you will need to tailor the general structure of the thesis to suit your research project. Journal articles published in the field of your study provide good examples.

3.1 The IMRD structure

An IMRD thesis often contains some or all of the following sections: an introduction, a description of the research material, a description of methodology, a description of the theoretical framework, a results section, a discussion and conclusion, and references.

3.1.1 Introduction

The introduction states briefly what is studied in the thesis and how, and why it is worth studying. One possible structure for the introduction is to first establish a clear research field by introducing your broad topic and its importance, and situating your study in the field. This can be followed by establishing a space within the pre-existing research – this is where you can situate your own research within a broader context, describing how it relates to previous work. Finally, you can move on to outline the purposes of your present research, and to set down the thesis or pose the research questions that guide the study, and finally outline the structure of your overall report, and how this structure will help you achieve your aim.
3.1.2 Description of the research material

This section introduces the material used in the study, perhaps setting it in a wider context and providing a clear link between the background information and the analysis. Depending on the material, this may include information about possible questionnaires, linguistic corpora, data sets, interviews, and audio or video recordings used in the study and the informants involved in them. Depending on the topic of the study, it may sometimes be more logical to have this section precede or follow the theoretical and methodological framework of the study. In some other cases it may be more logical and coherent to combine the description of the research material with the methodological framework, in which case the theoretical framework forms a section of its own.

3.1.3 Theoretical and methodological framework

This section explains in some detail how the topic has been studied before and how it is examined in the present study. The purpose of the section is to show the reader that you have done a thorough investigation of previous research related to the study and draws on relevant writings of other scholars preferably in peer-reviewed journal articles. Introduce the overall analytical approach that is adopted in the study (e.g., corpus linguistics, discourse analysis), particular viewpoints and ideas that are taken on from previous research as well as individual terms and concepts that are relevant for the study, to build an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The theoretical and methodological framework is introduced only to the extent that is actually relevant to the present study. It is useful to give the section a heading that describes the contents of the section and divide it into subsections to discuss different aspects of the theoretical and methodological framework (e.g., Syntactic and morphological theories in the study of the grammar of a text).

3.1.4 Results - Presentation of the analysis and findings

This section constitutes the longest part of the research paper. It makes visible what you make of the material using the selected theoretical and methodological framework. This is done by presenting brief, representative extracts of the material and discussing them for the reader. You may also integrate tables, charts, diagrams, images, or graphs, but you will also need to describe, comment upon, and analyse these. The findings may consist of making comparisons or pointing out similarities or differences between the extracts of materials and introducing the logic of categorising them. Please note that if you use interview materials, for example, this means going beyond of only
summarising what your interviewees tell you. It is often good to divide the results section into subsections and give each a heading that reflects the findings presented in each (the main analytic section could be called, e.g., *Stance taking in direct reported speech*). This section of your thesis will also contain references to previous research that are directly related to your findings.

### 3.1.5 Discussion/Conclusion

This section summarizes the main ways in which the study addresses the thesis or hypothesis that was set, or answers the questions that were posed in the introduction, showing how the study adds to previous knowledge. It discusses the validity of the findings, and links the results of this study back to previous research in the field. It can also refer to any practical applications that the study may have, strengths and weaknesses of the study, and directions for future study within the field. It may sometimes be useful to separate this into two sections, with the discussion section first to summarize and discuss the findings of the study in detail (e.g., *Discussion of the findings*). This will allow you to devote the conclusion for a more general examination of the implications, links to other research, and possible applications of the study.

### 3.1.6 References

A list of references must be provided, which presents all the sources referred to in your thesis, through summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation, including both research material and previous research (or primary and secondary sources) with full bibliographic information. Papers prepared in English Philology follow the referencing conventions introduced below (see section 4).

### 3.1.7 Appendices

It is sometimes convenient to present in one or more appendices material which cannot be discussed in full in the running text. If, for example, several sentences from a newspaper article are discussed in the body of the paper, the entire article may be included as an appendix, or, if a questionnaire was used to conduct a study, it is useful to reproduce it in an appendix. Each appendix is given a descriptive title and, if there is more than one appendix, a number as well. Each appendix must also be referred to in the running text (see Appendix for an example of an appendix).
3.1.8 IMRD structure summary

An IMRD thesis will thus include an introduction, some sort of description of your research materials, a theoretical and/or methodological framework, a section presenting and analysing your results, and a final discussion of conclusion. These core sections will be followed by a list of references and appendices (as needed). The overall framework still leaves you with the freedom, and responsibility, to develop an effective, interesting, and clear structure for your own ideas.

You may wish to consider the following rough guidelines for allocating space within your thesis. **Remember that these percentages are approximate, and will vary widely from thesis to thesis!**

- Introduction (approximately 5% of total word count)
- Description of the Research Material (approximately 5% of total word count)
- Theoretical and Methodological Framework (approximately 30–35% of total word count)
- Results and Analysis (approximately 50% of total word count)
- Discussion and Conclusion (approximately 5–10% of total word count)

3.2 The thesis-led research report structure

There is no fixed pattern for a thesis dealing with critical or social theory, historical or cultural study, philosophical argument, or interpretation of literary, cinematographic, or other forms of artistic or cultural production. Instead, the structure of a thesis in these fields tends to be determined by the internal logic of the study itself. In other words, the structure of your thesis is derived from the content of your thesis. However, theses in these fields do have a number of common elements, including an introduction, a number of core chapters, a conclusion, and references.

3.2.1 Introduction

All theses will have an introduction of some sort. This will do a number of things, including some, but not necessarily all, of these functions:

- tell the reader the problem/topic/field/questions you are addressing
- capture the readers’ interest and engage them with your topic
- give the reader all of the required and appropriate background information, be it historical, contextual, or methodological, to introduce your topic. This information need not be
complete or exhaustive, as you will also include more detailed discussion in your core content chapters

- introduce your theoretical framework or approach – again, this does not need to be complete as you will be going back to relevant theories as you develop your material in your core chapters
- provide a brief overview of how the topic has been approached by previous researchers. However, much of this sort of material will be integrated into the core chapters of your thesis
- state clearly how you aim to approach the problem/topic/field/questions you are addressing
- offer the reader a clear indication of the main goal of your work (your thesis, argument, or question)
- limit the scope of your work – indicate what you are not going to be addressing and why
- indicate how your thesis is structured to achieve your aim

3.2.2 Chapters

After the introduction, you will organize your work into a number of chapters. The number of chapters might range between three and seven, depending on the overall length of your report. A two-chapter thesis would in all likelihood feel insufficiently articulated, while more than five chapters may result in insufficiently developed arguments, particularly at the bachelor’s and seminar level. Each chapter will have a clear focus, and will represent a significant step on your overall argumentation. These chapters constitute the core of your thesis, where you present, support, and situate your own work. It is also worth noting that each of your core chapters will contain elements of theoretical, historical or contextual background that are directly relevant to the argument you are developing in that chapter. Similarly, they will contain references to previous research that are directly related to the chapter’s topic.

Chapters should have descriptive titles that indicate the nature of their contents, and (possibly) their role in the thesis as a whole. Each chapter should have its own introduction and conclusion, which will be demarcated by more or less explicit metatext. These micro-introductions and conclusions will relate the chapters to each other and to the thesis as a whole. There are many options for selecting and organising the material you will cover in each chapter, but some possibilities are:

- argumentative – based on a logical argumentative sequence
• geographical – based on region or area
• sequential – based on time, importance, development, etc.
• textual – based on separate works/texts/phenomena
• thematic – based on separate themes or elements of your overall topic
• conceptual – based on a series of different concepts
• personal – based on individuals or groups of people

This decision will be made based on the nature of your materials, topic, and overall purpose. Let your material shape your structure.

3.2.3 Conclusion

Following these core chapters, you will need to have a conclusion. Here you can summarise the main points of your argument, pull together the different strands that constitute your thesis, and present the overall results of your work. You can recapitulate the points you have been making throughout your thesis in a way that helps the reader identify main ideas, and convinces them of the strength and importance of your argument. It is also an opportunity to situate your arguments within a broader overall context. One way of thinking about this is to view the conclusion as an opportunity to shape your research space by summarising your approach, argument, and references to previous research. This is generally followed by some sort of rhetorical or exhortative close, which can gesture towards the importance of your work, recommendations for change based on your work, or potentially to possible avenues for research development.

3.2.4 Works cited

A list of references must be provided, which presents all of the sources referred to in your thesis, through summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation, including both research material and previous research (or primary and secondary sources) with full bibliographic information. Papers prepared in English Philology follow the referencing conventions introduced below (see section 4).

3.2.5 Appendices

These are a place for any large pieces of text which support you thesis, but are extraneous to the efficient development of its central arguments. Appendices will not count towards or against your
word limit, and in fact are unlikely to be read unless they are indeed directly and highly relevant to your thesis.

### 3.2.6 Thesis-led structure summary

This leaves you with an overall framework, but one which still leaves you with the freedom, and responsibility, to develop an effective, interesting, and clear structure for your own ideas. You may wish to consider the following rough guidelines for allocating space within your thesis. **Remember that these percentages are approximate and will vary widely from thesis to thesis!**

- Introduction (approximately 10–15% of total word count)
- Chapter 1 (approximately 20% of total word count)
- Chapter 2 (approximately 20% of total word count)
- Chapter 3 (approximately 20% of total word count)
- Chapter 4 (approximately 20% of total word count)
- Conclusion (approximately 5–10% of total word count)

*(Note that the chapters, however many you have, are of roughly equal length – if you have a chapter that is considerably longer or shorter than another, it will usually indicate a structural problem.)*
4 Style and formatting of a research report

The aim of a research report is to tell the reader about the study in a comprehensible, logical, and accurate way. It is also important to spell out a logical connection between the separate sections. Meta-communication plays an important role in underlining such a connection and helping the reader understand the research carried out: a couple of lines of introduction at the beginning of each section will tell the reader what is about to follow, and, at the end, a few summarizing sentences will remind the reader what has just been shown.

4.1 Grammar and style

In writing a research report, you should use clear and precise English that is grammatically correct and appropriate in style. All research reports should be written in an appropriately formal academic register. While developing an appropriate academic voice will take time and practice, you should consider the following general points:

- use more formal vocabulary when choices are possible (e.g., ‘examine’ instead of ‘look at’)
- be as precise and clear as possible
- use specialized, field-specific vocabulary as appropriate
- be relatively impersonal (do not rely excessively on ‘I’ structures)
- do not use contractions (e.g., ‘it’s)
- avoid colloquialisms and idiomatic language
- avoids rhetorical questions
- avoid sweeping generalizations (e.g., ‘mankind’ or ‘a normal person worries about his job’)

You should also aim for consistency in spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, etc. between chapters or sections. It is a common practice to avoid breaking words at the ends of lines (especially with words having no suffixes, prefixes or other suitable “cutting points”). When in doubt, it is useful to consult a dictionary for the appropriate British English or American English spelling conventions, and be sure to use your word processor’s spell checking function.

In finalizing the report, layout, paragraphs, punctuation, and quotations should be checked carefully. Also, you should make sure that no pages, tables, etc. are missing or wrongly numbered;
that all notes to the text or tables have a number or symbol in the text or table; and that no notes are missing.

4.2 General conventions

This document has been drawn up by using the font Calibri (font size 12). Another recommended font is Times New Roman (font size 12). The appropriate line spacing for the document is 1.5 and margins 2 cm for left and right, and 2.5 cm for top and bottom margins. Footnotes should be in 10-point font size, of the same font as the rest of the document and should be single-spaced. Entries in the list of references can also be single-spaced.

There are two options for paragraphing. Either an extra space should be left between paragraphs, with no indentation at the beginning of paragraphs, or no extra space should be left and the beginning of each paragraph should be indented, with the exception of the first paragraph of a section or sub-section or after a table, diagram or illustration.

Hyphenation, capitalization and abbreviations should be kept to a minimum. Avoid hyphens with inter-, non-, post-, pre-, sub-, etc. The words being emphasized are entered in the text in boldface. Note that this convention should also be used sparingly. Sets of initials should have no full point, e.g., OE, ME, USA. For the abbreviations that are not contractions full points are used: e.g., i.e., f., ff. (‘following’) c., etc. Check comma use for e.g., etc., and i.e. from your chosen reference style.

4.3 Quotations and glosses

Quotations are marked off from the text by double inverted commas (or double quotation marks), e.g., in the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style: As Pomerantz & Fehr (1997) put it, conversation analysis aims “to explicate the shared methods interactants use to produce and recognize their own and other people’s conduct” (p. 69).

Longer quotations are normally broken off from the text and indented (single-spaced; no quotation marks needed), e.g., in the APA referencing style:
In Buttny’s (1998) words, 

[t]he conversational practice of reported speech takes a prior utterance situated in a particular context and unearths it and gives it a life again in the new soil of the reporting context. To fit into its new context, the reported speech often needs to be contextually framed so recipients understand it in the desired way (p. 56).

A word or expression which is to be glossed is italicized and the gloss itself marked off with single inverted commas (single quotation marks); e.g., the Finnish word *kuningas* 'king' is of Germanic origin.

4.4 **Headings**

Each main section starts from a new page. For most purposes, two levels (e.g., 1.1.1) of subheading will be sufficient. Only the first word and proper names are typed with a capital letter. On a related note, avoid empty headings, i.e., headings which are followed immediately by a subheading with little or no text in between. Also avoid hanging headings, or headings which appear on a separate page from their contents.

4.5 **Footnotes**

Notes should be kept to a minimum and they should be no more than a few lines in length. They are intended for the inclusion of additional explanatory material that is extraneous to the main line of your argument, but still relevant to your topic. They are placed at the bottom of the page, as footnotes. Note indicators in the text come at a break in the text and follow terminal punctuation.¹

4.6 **Examples and extracts**

Example sentences and extracts from the research materials are indented and numbered with Arabic numerals in parentheses, e.g.,:

(1) SBCSAE 0019 Doesn’t work in this household  
  01 FRANK: it’s a royal mess, isn’t it.  
  02 (0.5)  
  03 MELISSA: yes it is.

¹ Footnotes should be single-spaced and in a 10-point font size.
Do not end a paragraph or a section with an example or an illustration, but always with some running text.

4.7 Illustrations

Figures and tables can be used to illustrate relevant information, which is then discussed in the flow of the text. Each illustration should be referred to in the running text (for examples of illustrations, see figure 1 and table 1). The number and title should be typed below each figure (e.g., a map or some other image) in bold and above each table in italics.

![Figure 1. Example of a figure.](image)

Table 1. Example of a table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>value A</th>
<th>value B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category X</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category Y</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Explanations of symbols, abbreviations, etc. should be typed immediately below each figure or table because they should be intelligible without the reader having to refer to the running text.
5 Referencing

A scholarly study necessarily relies and draws on previous research in terms of theoretical approaches, methodological choices and analytical findings. Any connections to relevant existing ideas, concepts, and terms must therefore be acknowledged. This is done by referring to such sources in the running text and providing bibliographic information about the sources at the end of the research report.

Depending on their particular field of research and instructions provided by their teachers or thesis supervisors, students of English Philology may choose between two commonly used referencing styles:

- the American Psychological Association (APA) style
- the Modern Language Association (MLA) style

Whichever style is chosen, it is important that it be followed consistently throughout the research report.

More information can be found in style guides available in the university library and online (see Appendix A for a list of relevant websites). Students of English Philology also have access to the RefWorks reference management tool (http://libguides.oulu.fi/RW) that supports the preparation of a manuscript according to a particular style and makes it possible to create a list of references automatically. Students who are preparing their seminar papers and especially their master’s theses are encouraged to use RefWorks when writing their research reports.

5.1 In-text citations

When presenting an idea, concept or term developed by another researcher in the body of a research report, it is important that the source is adequately acknowledged. In-text citations generally include the name(s) of the author(s) of an earlier study, the year when it was published and, if possible, the number of the page in the publication on which the cited information can be found. There are various ways of citing previous research appropriately and even elegantly. Technically, in-text citations are usually either 1) direct quotes from a specific page in the source, 2) paraphrases of a particular passage on a specific page in the source or 3) a general paraphrase.
describing the entire source study. Both in APA and MLA styles the reference has to occur at the sentence rather than paragraph level.

5.2 List of references

For each reference provided in the running text of a research report, bibliographic information must be provided at the end of the report. Bibliographic entries usually include at least the name(s) of the author(s), the year of publication, the title of the publication and information about the publisher.
References


[These references are formatted in the APA reference style]
Appendices

Appendix A
These are links to reliable websites introducing referencing styles.

1. American Psychological Association (APA)
   http://www.apastyle.org/
   https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/

2. Modern Language Association (MLA)
   http://www.mla.org
   https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/