

Doing Dissertations in Politics: The Student's Guide to Writing a Successful Dissertation

Writing a dissertation is a daunting task, but it is also an opportunity to make a significant contribution to your field of study. This guide will help you every step of the way, from choosing a topic to writing the final draft.

The first step in writing a dissertation is choosing a topic. This can be a challenging task, but there are a few things you can do to make it easier. First, start by brainstorming ideas that interest you. Once you have a few ideas, do some research to see if there is enough information available on your topic. You should also make sure that your topic is manageable in scope.

Once you have chosen a topic, you need to decide how you are going to research it. There are a variety of research methods that you can use, including:



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by Simon Head

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 456 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 210 pages



- **Literature review:** This involves reading and reviewing the existing literature on your topic.
- **Interviews:** This involves talking to experts in your field.
- **Surveys:** This involves collecting data from a large group of people.
- **Data analysis:** This involves using statistical methods to analyze data.

The research method that you choose will depend on your topic and the type of data that you need to collect.

The literature review is a critical part of the dissertation writing process. It allows you to demonstrate your knowledge of the existing literature on your topic and to situate your own research within the wider context of the field.

When writing a literature review, it is important to:

- **Be selective:** Only include the most relevant and important studies in your review.
- **Be critical:** Evaluate the studies that you include in your review and identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- **Be organized:** Structure your review in a logical way so that the reader can easily follow your argument.

If you are using quantitative data in your dissertation, you will need to analyze it using statistical methods. This can be a complex process, but there are a variety of software programs that can help you.

When analyzing your data, it is important to:

- **Be clear about your research questions:** What are you trying to learn from your data?
- **Choose the appropriate statistical tests:** There are a variety of statistical tests that you can use, so it is important to choose the ones that are most appropriate for your data and your research questions.
- **Interpret your results carefully:** Once you have run your statistical tests, you need to interpret the results carefully. What do the results mean? Do they support your research hypotheses?

The final stage of the dissertation writing process is writing up your findings. This can be a daunting task, but it is important to remember that you have already done the hard work. You have chosen a topic, conducted your research, and analyzed your data. Now, all you have to do is write it all up in a clear and concise way.

When writing up your dissertation, it is important to:

- **Start with a strong :** You should grab the reader's attention and provide a roadmap for the rest of the dissertation.
- **Be organized:** Structure your dissertation in a logical way so that the reader can easily follow your argument.
- **Use clear and concise language:** Avoid using jargon and technical terms that the reader may not understand.
- **Proofread carefully:** Once you have finished writing your dissertation, proofread it carefully for any errors.

Writing a dissertation is a challenging task, but it is also an opportunity to make a significant contribution to your field of study. This guide has provided you with the tools and resources that you need to write a successful dissertation. Now, it is up to you to put in the hard work and get started.

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- **Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E.** (2010). Practical research: Planning and design. Pearson.
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