

# WRITING TO FOCUS ON YOUR CONTRIBUTION

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# THE 'SHITTY FIRST DRAFT'

- ▶ Anne Lamott essay (find it using Google)
- ▶ for your eyes only
  - ▶ don't self-censor
  - ▶ don't worry about formal referencing
  - ▶ leave reminders to yourself
- ▶ separate writing from editing
  - ▶ avoid the perfect sentence vortex  
(*How to Fix Your Academic Writing Trouble*, 90-91)

## TWO KEY ALLIES

- ▶ your central research question—what's the central question your thesis is designed to answer?
  - ▶ a thesis is an argument
- ▶ your contribution
  - ▶ This thesis makes a substantial original contribution to knowledge by...
- ▶ these make a thesis different from
  - ▶ a textbook
  - ▶ a volume of collected essays
  - ▶ a commentary

# YOUR THESIS IS A REPORT ON RESEARCH

- ▶ your readers (examiners!) do not need to make the research journey you have made



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8un\\_iOzc3vE&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8un_iOzc3vE&t=3s)

# YOUR THESIS IS A REPORT ON RESEARCH

- ▶ your readers (examiners!) do not need to make the research journey you have made
- ▶ avoid a magical mystery tour!
- ▶ aim for clarity
  - ▶ over your central research question
  - ▶ over your contribution
  - ▶ over the journey you are taking the readers to get to the destination of your contribution

# YOUR OPENING CHAPTER(S)

- ▶ What are you studying?—breadth and depth
- ▶ How are you studying this?—research question
- ▶ Why is this worthwhile?
- ▶ What will be distinctive about your contribution?
  - ▶ literature review
- ▶ What method(s) will you use?
  - ▶ Why are they appropriate to answer your research question?
- ▶ Where we're going: a map of the thesis

# YOUR CONCLUDING CHAPTER

- ▶ remind your readers of your research question
- ▶ summarise your key findings, highlighting your contribution



# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work

The portrait of Paul in Acts is a matter of longstanding debate since the Tübingen school argued for a sharp contrast with the portrait of Paul in his letters by noticing general themes and particular vocabulary across the undisputed Pauline letters.

Locate

# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work
- ▶ Focus on what your thesis addresses

This thesis studies Paul's only substantial speech to Christians in Acts (the Miletus speech, 20:17-35) in conversation with related speeches in Luke's Gospel (especially Luke 22:14-38; 12:1-53; 21:5-36) and one undisputed Pauline letter (1 Thessalonians) to compare the portrait of Christian leadership and the concomitant lifestyle of Christian leaders in those sources.

Focus

# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work
- ▶ Focus on what your thesis addresses
- ▶ Anchor your work by showing method(s)

This thesis exegetes the sources carefully, building on previous studies of echoes of one source in others, in order to see how far the Miletus speech is Lukan and how far it is Pauline.

Anchor

# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work
- ▶ Focus on what your thesis addresses
- ▶ Anchor your work by showing method(s)
- ▶ Report your findings

The portrait of Christian leaders which emerges from the three sources shows considerable congruence across four key themes: faithful fulfillment of leadership responsibility, suffering, attitudes to wealth and work, and the death of Jesus.

Report



# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work
- ▶ Focus on what your thesis addresses
- ▶ Anchor your work by showing method(s)
- ▶ Report your findings
- ▶ Argue—sum up your contribution

The Miletus speech is seen to be close in themes, presentation and vocabulary to an early, undisputed Pauline letter.

Argue

# YOUR ABSTRACT

- ▶ Locate your work
- ▶ Focus on what your thesis addresses
- ▶ Anchor your work by showing method(s)
- ▶ Report your findings
- ▶ Argue—sum up your contribution
- ▶ Significance—show what your work adds to the field, and what others can do with this knowledge

This study invites a revision of previous assessments of the Paul of Acts debate by demonstrating that when Paul speaks or writes to a believing audience as a pastor, his themes and vocabulary sound remarkably similar. This conclusion can be further tested by examining other Pauline letters.

Significance

# STRUCTURING YOUR CHAPTERS

- ▶ How does this chapter add to the overall argument?
  - ▶ highlight how it makes the case for your contribution
- ▶ Topping and tailing the chapter
  - ▶ At the start
    - ▶ what the chapter is about
    - ▶ how it contributes the whole thesis argument
    - ▶ how it is organised
  - ▶ At the end
    - ▶ what we've learned
    - ▶ how that moves the thesis argument forward
    - ▶ how this conclusion leads to the next chapter

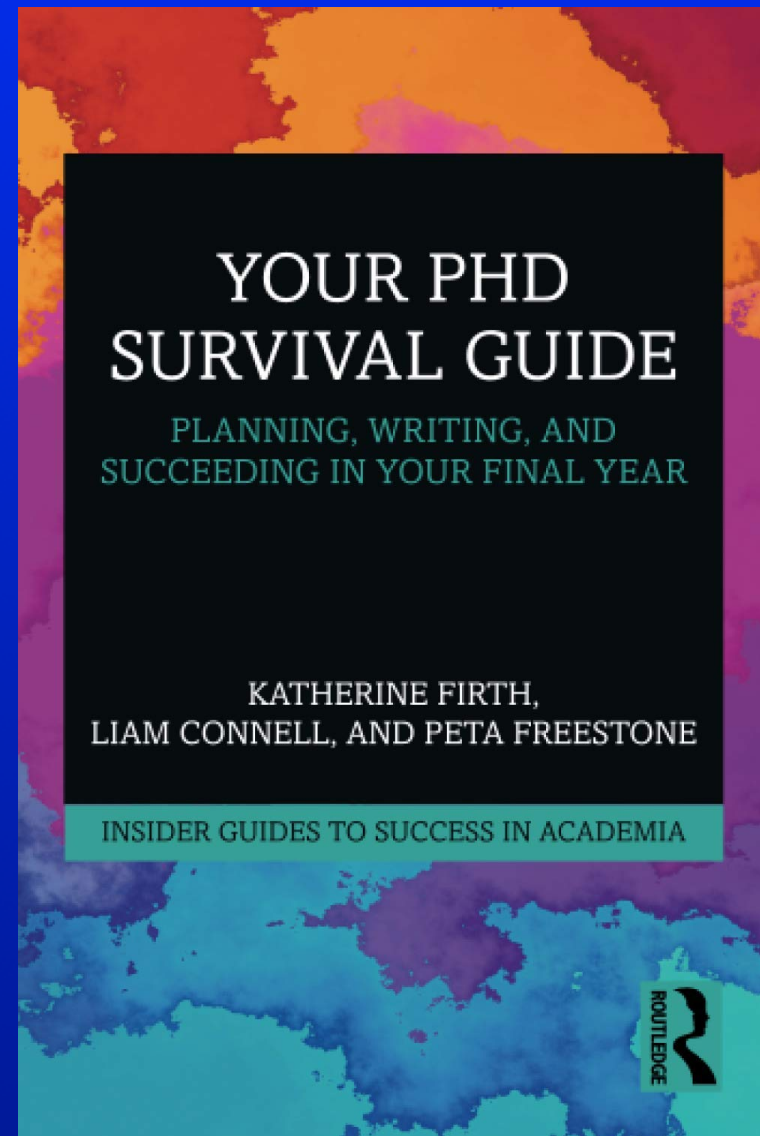
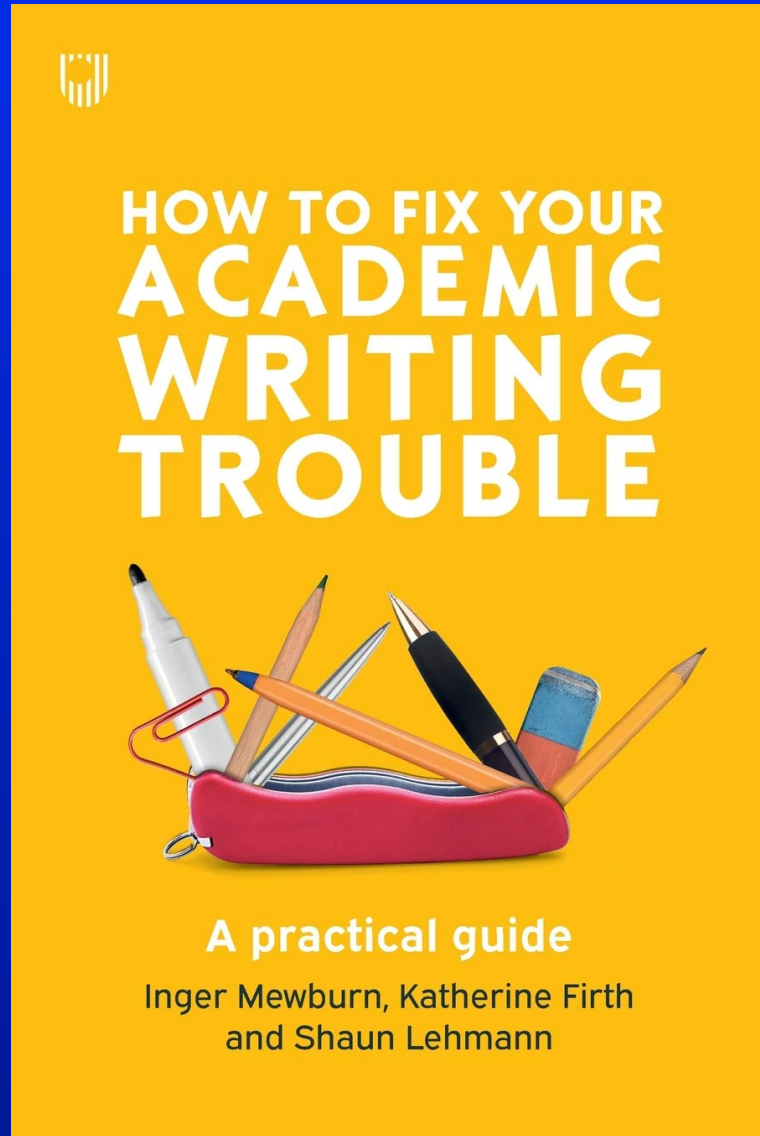
# ORGANISING A PARAGRAPH/SECTION

- ▶ Topic sentence at the start—what are you claiming?
  - ▶ What reasons support that claim?
- ▶ What justifies connecting those reasons to your argument?
  - ▶ What evidence supports those reasons?
- ▶ Are there alternative views/objections/problems for your argument?
  - ▶ If so, how do you respond?

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- ▶ Patter [patthomson.com](http://patthomson.com) Pat Thomson
- ▶ Thesis Whisperer [thesiswhisperer.com](http://thesiswhisperer.com)  
Inger Mewburn
- ▶ Research Degree Insiders  
[researchdegreeinsiders.blog](http://researchdegreeinsiders.blog) Katherine Firth

# USEFUL RESOURCES





YOU CAN GET THESE SLIDES FROM

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ACTS *and* MORE

<http://stevewalton.info>