

How to write a PhD thesis

Note Title

9/23/2004

What kind of life?

Family

Fun

Power

Money

Scholarship

Scholar

Scholarship

Service

Students

Picking a specialty

Religion

Arts

Literature

Science

Surfing

⋮

The Social Contract

Surfing vs Software

Find your muse

Picking a Problem

Simple to state

no obvious solution

clear benefit

progress is testable

can be broken into small steps

Don't pick too-easy a problem

My examples

How do you know?

Scalable systems.

Process

Work outside?

Buckminster Fuller

Freud

Work Inside?

Pasteur, Darwin, Neuman

How to write a Thesis: Process

① Pick a faculty member
rich & famous
sympatico ↘ tension

② Chat with advisor about
what interests you both
(a hard problem).
Advisor will not help much
if not interested in problem.

③ Get 5 Theses
Advisors
Advisors most recent student
Best in your field
Worst in your department
Use the worst to fight depression
Use advisors to fight absurdity
use recent as template.

④ Get 3 best papers in area -
ask around
citation analysis

⑤ Study them VERY carefully
redo all results (best effort)
check all the details
master the references
This is research.

It after 6 months
you have no ideas, quit
contact authors with questions
and ideas (explain LPU)
Send 3, 4 to conferences
for feedback (don't get depressed)

⑥ Write it up.

thesis of the thesis:
one sentence/paragraph
write inside out:
3: Thesis
4: proof
2: pro or art
5: future
1: intro

This part is harder than
you think: not 10x10 pages.