

**NAGOYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY WORKSHOPS 2017**



# **Academic Writing** *and* **Logical Thinking**

**May 17 ~ June 14, 2017**

**Instructor: Dr. Paul Lai**

# NAGOYA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY WORKSHOPS 2017



## Review



**Writing is a process of  
communicating thoughts  
through the arrangement of texts**

*All academic writers are required to know*

## **The Writing Requirement**

How **words** can be properly arranged to express the ideas.

## **The Thinking Requirement**

How **ideas** can be properly arranged so that they can be properly expressed through words in a clear & convincing manner.



# Main point of my talk

学術論文の基本的な目的は、結論へと至る論理的ステップを提示することによって、論文の主張する結論を受け入れるよう読者を説得することである。

**Training of logical thinking skills  
is needed in order for your thoughts  
to be communicated properly  
in an academic paper.**

WRITING  
教養教育院



# Main point of my talk

学術論文の基本的な目的は、結論へと至る論理的ステップを提示することによって、論文の主張する結論を受け入れるよう読者を説得することである。

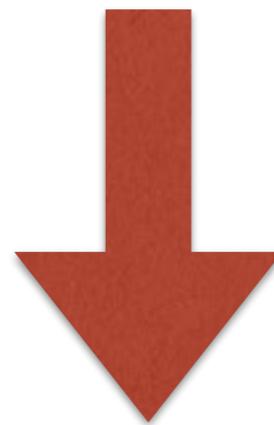
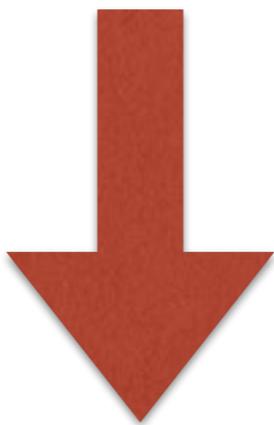
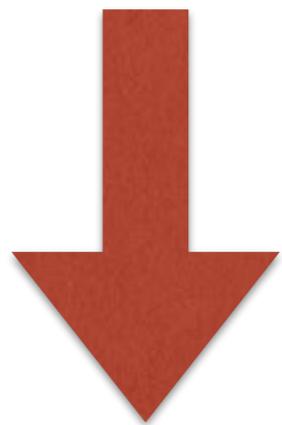
**Training of logical thinking skills is needed in order for the paper's thesis statement to be **convincing**.**

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**Thesis Statement**



**Supporting Premise(s)**



**Abstract**

**Introduction**

**Others**



# How to make your writing clear

**Group work:**

**Discuss with your group members about the paper that you are planning to write.**

**Summarise the main point of the paper in one sentence.**

# Thesis Statement

**Being Clear**

# Being Clear in Communication

Having a Clear  
**Thesis Statement**

# *The Thesis Statement Recipe*

*Textbook for  
the Nagoya University Library workshop series on  
Academic Writing & Logical Thinking Skills*



*Written by  
Paul W. L. Lai, Ph.D  
Director, Nagoya University Writing Center  
(Mei-Writing)*

Concise Summary  
of the  
main research claim

## **Example 1A- (TS)**

Contemporary art is not easy for viewers to understand. Therefore, museums are preparing various kinds of support methods and they are offering information about artists and artworks. Especially now, digital media is widely used with the development of ICT.

[submitted as a “thesis statement” by a graduate student from the school of Information Sciences]

one-sentence statement that  
encapsulates  
the main claim  
of your research paper.

## **(Before)**

Contemporary art is not easy for viewers to understand. Therefore, museums are preparing various kinds of support methods and they are offering information about artists and artworks. Especially now, digital media is widely used with the development of ICT.

## **(After)**

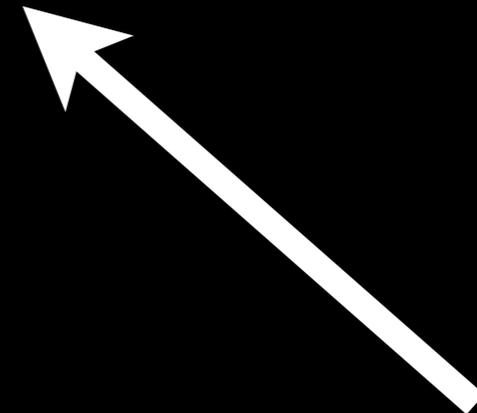
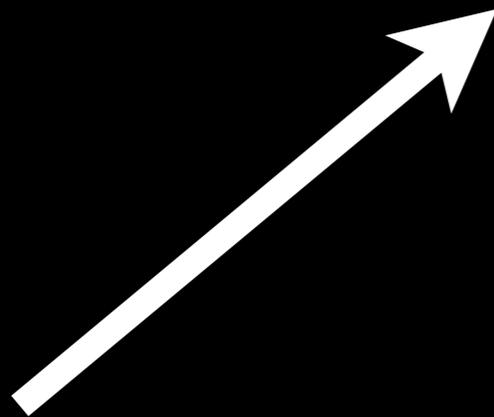
Digital media is used to facilitate the viewers' understanding of contemporary art.

**Thesis Statement**

**Support 1**

**Support 2**

**Support 3**



Although a thesis statement is normally written in just one-sentence, it is **different from a normal sentence** in many aspects.

**(I) A thesis statement must have a **truth-value**.**

In other words,

a thesis statement must be either true or false.

(2) A thesis statement should be **objectively verifiable**.

In other words,

The truth value of a thesis statement should be independently verifiable from a third person point of view.

(3) The truthfulness of a thesis statement needs justification through argumentation.

In other words,

a thesis statement is not merely a representation of some factual event.

it is a **belief statement** that *such and such is the case*, whose truthfulness requires justification through collecting evidences and arranging them in a convincing way.

## (4) A good thesis statement is not trivial.

Consider the following two belief statements:

*“The earth orbits around the sun.”*

Unlike when it was first claimed by Nicolaus Copernicus in 1543, the thesis statement now is trivial.

*“The orbiting speed of the earth is getting slower, and after 10,000 years later one day will last 30 hours.”*

This thesis statement is not trivial, and requires justification.

(5) A good thesis statement should be as specific as possible so that its truth values can be verified effectively.

Compare the following two belief statements:

*“Japanese university education system is problematic.”*

Too broad, what “problematic” means is unspecified.

Trivial too, no education system is unproblematic in practice.

*“One fundamental problem in Japanese university education is the lack of logical thinking education.”*

A specific problem is mentioned. And the thesis statement requires justification through argumentation, etc.

(5) A good thesis statement should be as specific as possible so that its truth values can be verified effectively.

For the same reason that it should not be a broad statement, a thesis statement should not be a vague statement.

e.g. “Smoking is hazardous to health.”

Too vague, what “hazardous” means is unspecified.

Trivial too, we all know that smoking is hazardous to health.

**One possible improvement:**

“Smoking is likely to cause heart disease.”

(6) A good thesis statement should have a non-compound sentence structure.

Everything in the thesis statement must be proven.

# **Which one of the following is a satisfactory thesis statement?**

1. Is it possible for one day to have 36 hours?
2. Let's have 36 hours in one day!
3. One day needs to have 36 hours!
4. It is a fact that one day has 24 only hours.
5. I wish that one day would have 36 hours after 1,000 years later.
6. I believe that one day will have 36 hours after 1,000 years later.
7. I believe that one day has 24 hours.

## **Which one of the following is a satisfactory thesis statement?**

1. Internet addiction is likely to cause academic failure, job loss, and a breakdown in personal relationships.
2. Internet addiction is a well-known problem today, and many people suffer from it.
3. There is no question that Internet has changed our lives.

## **Which one of the following is a satisfactory thesis statement?**

1. Dream Yoga can help you develop awareness in dreams.
2. Dream Yoga, which is one Buddhist path to enlightenment, can help you develop awareness in dreams.
3. Dream Yoga can help you develop the ability to be aware that you are dreaming.

# Group Exercises

**Thank you very much!**

*Writing Is Thinking*