

Here's my advice for future thesis writers: When you think you've planned a reasonable amount of time for a task, do not triple but quintuple that sucker. Plan 5 hours for the 1 hour jobs because little things tend to blow up and if you aren't careful you can wind up taking two steps backward with every step forward.

Jacob Ott '20

Jacob Ott



Josh Grossman

Writing a thesis is all about communication. Communication with your advisor, communication with the preceptors, and communication with yourself. Constantly be asking yourself what your research goals are and what steps you need to complete to accomplish them. If you are ever confused, overwhelmed, or uncertain, you should never hesitate to meet with your thesis advisor and get their advice. You have many incredible resources - use them. I believe in you!

Josh Grossman '20

First of all, you are in the right place because EPS is the best department. Second, I recommend stepping back every now and then to remember the big picture of your project. It is easy to get bogged down in the details, but looking at your project more holistically can help you realize the main takeaways and remind you why you love what you are doing.

Jamie Weisenberg '20



Jamie Weisenberg

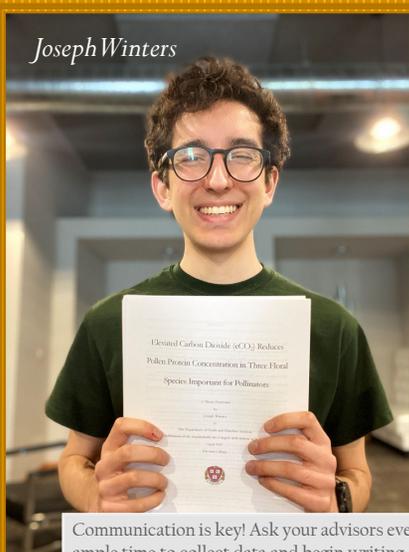
Vlad Sevostianov



My thesis experience was atypical, as I did my thesis off-cycle. This allowed me to use my summer more effectively for research, without which the thesis would have been difficult to complete. Though I lacked the community/comradery aspect which is certainly a key highlight for most thesis writers, I was able to keep myself on track and never become complacent by seeing other thesis writers behind schedule, since there were no others! Choosing the topic and framing the proper question is certainly the most important aspect; if you spend most of your time getting the proper questions in place, answering them is somewhat straightforward, and then writing up the thesis even more so. So especially at the start it is important to spend a lot of time asking the right questions, even if this takes a couple months, because it really is the most crucial and difficult part. Another important note is that you should enjoy the day-to-day work; determining if you enjoy experimental laboratory, field, modeling, or theoretical work, or some combination of them, and the exact processes you would need to undertake is just as important as your topic, as if you love your topic but hate the day-to-day work you will have a miserable experience. This is something that you should carefully consider before even starting the thesis, and meeting with potential thesis advisors is a good way to see what your options are. Lastly, utilizing the department's support of students to present at AGU should almost be a requirement--this was the perfect way to finish off the thesis after my department presentation, and an amazing opportunity to meet potential PhD advisors and explore further ideas and opportunities within the Earth sciences.

The thesis is a lot of fun, I loved it, and I strongly believe that every student must take this amazing opportunity--and Harvard tradition--to conduct undergraduate research; I learned more than even several classes together taught me.

Vlad Sevostianov '19



Joseph Winters

Communication is key! Ask your advisors everything — do it early and often. This will help you roll out any kinks in your research early on, giving you ample time to collect data and begin writing. And speaking of writing, don't be afraid to do it! In the end, your thesis is basically a really long, complicated essay with lots of numbers and figures in it. It should be more than just "readable"! And most of all, pace of yourself and make time in the thesis process for your friends — you never know when a pandemic or something might tear you away from them with only five days' notice!

Joseph Winters '20



SENIOR THESIS CLASS OF 2020



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