

WRITING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Saying “Thank You”

Foreign students often have trouble saying “thank you” in a way that sounds natural and sincere. They often use words or phrases that might sound funny or awkward, or they may simply repeat the words “thank you” over and over again. Therefore, this handout should help you write your *Acknowledgements* section of your dissertation.

According to one source, the *Acknowledgements* section of a Ph.D. dissertation is the most widely read section. Whether you believe this or not, many individuals who helped you in the process of writing may check to see if, indeed, they have meant something to you.

When you write your acknowledgements, write an exhaustive list of all the people you wish to thank for helping or collaborating with you on your thesis; then organize them, beginning with those who helped you with the product (the actual writing of the dissertation itself) the most. You may even want to say some words about the people who helped you in finding the sources for your thesis: the librarian’s knowledge and patience cannot be overestimated. Do not overlook those (perhaps before you came to Georgia Tech) who helped you to gain practical experience. These people may have been paramount in their contribution to what you achieved at Tech. At the end, most writers thank those who lent moral/emotional support. Of course, they are often parents, spouses, friends, and colleagues—all of those who supported your effort.

What you need is a great list of vocabulary and phrases that you can use so that your acknowledgements do not sound redundant, boring, or awkward. So here it is.

Very strong thanks (save these for the people who helped you the most):

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my committee

I’m deeply indebted to

I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to

I’m extremely grateful to

(Something—my success, the completion of my dissertation) would not have been possible without the support and nurturing of (person).

I cannot begin to express my thanks to ..., who

Less strong, but very appreciative:

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to ... / I must also thank ...

I would like to thank... / I also wish to thank...

I am also grateful to ... / I’d also like to extend my gratitude to

Many thanks to

Special thanks to

Thanks also to ...

Thanks should also go to ...

I very much appreciate...

Especially/Particularly helpful to me during this time were ____, ____, and ____, who ...

I also had great pleasure of working with

I cannot leave Georgia Tech without mentioning (person), who.

Less strong, but certainly adequate

I'd like to acknowledge the assistance/help/effort of....

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance/help/effort of ...

I'd like to recognize the assistance/help/effort that I received from

After you thank, say WHY you are thanking them in the following ways:

Several people/someone played a decisive role in (doing something for you)

Someone provided you with encouragement and patience throughout the duration of this project

Someone was instrumental in (doing) something for you...

Someone whose help cannot be overestimated....

Someone extended a great amount of assistance...

Someone always supported and nurtured you...

Someone never let you down...

Someone never wavered in their support..

Some adjectives/nouns to describe what these people gave you:

valuable advice / invaluable contribution / suggestions / experience

invaluable insight into (something)

relentless/unrelenting/unparalleled support

profound belief in my work/in my abilities

useful/practice/helpful contributions

practical suggestions

helpful advice

unwavering support/unwavering guidance

constructive criticism/advice

ingenious/insightful suggestions

knowledge (extensive knowledge, unparalleled knowledge)

patience that cannot be underestimated

guidance

If you have seen other phrases or vocabulary that should be added to this list, please let me know, as I would like to make sure I have the most comprehensive list possible.

