

# THESIS DEFENSE



## The Basics

Like Bananagrams or a deck of cards, Thesis Defense can be played in a variety of ways. The basic rules are as follows:

1. Assemble a group of 3-6 people, who will rotate between the roles of “committee member” and “thesis defendant.” One person per round serves as the defendant.
2. Use your favorite mode of determining who goes first (we trust you)-- coin flip, dice roll, or picking a card and seeing whose starts with the letter closest to A--then proceed around the circle from there.
3. The defendant selects a card from the pile labeled Thesis. This is the thesis they will be defending as if it were their own. (Any resemblance to real theses, completed or abandoned, is purely coincidental. And probably doesn't reflect well on those other theses.)
4. The committee members each select a card from the pile labeled Concepts. These are the angles of analysis they'll be pushing the defendant to include in his or her defense.
5. The defendant stands and displays his or her title. At that time, the committee members each reveal their concepts by saying something along the following lines:

“I'm looking forward to hearing your thesis presentation, and I'm especially looking forward to hearing your thoughts on [concept]”

“I'm looking forward to hearing your thesis presentation, but I want to be up front about my biases-- if you don't talk about [concept], it will be hard to take this seriously.”

“I'm looking forward to hearing your thesis presentation, and maybe you can help me with something--how do you think this relates to [concept]?”

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## The Basics (continued)

6. The defendant must then produce a short spiel that relates his or her title to the concepts the committee members have named. While he or she speaks, the committee members can allot, on merit, currency of their choosing to the speaker. The box includes some basic currency, but we recommend substituting or supplanting this with other currency like poker chips (grants) or candy (late-night vending machine sustenance.)
7. As players alternate roles and accumulate currency, they build their academic empires.

## Variations

◇ **Cross-Examination:** After the defendant presents his or her thesis, the floor is open to the committee members for further questioning and currency distribution.

◇ **Voting** (4+ players): If a committee member believes his or her concept has been inadequately dealt with, he can call a vote to dock the defendant a number of currency units of his choosing. (The number of points to be docked must be announced before the vote takes place.) If the vote is in the committee member's favor, the defendant is docked currency units. If the vote goes against the committee member, he himself is docked the currency units he would otherwise have taken from the defendant.

◇ **Department Chair:** After each participant defends a thesis, the player with the most currency becomes the Department Chair. The department chair has the capacity to prevent the defendant from being docked points; if he or she chooses to exercise this capacity after a vote to dock points, he or she must give a currency unit to the committee member who was attempting to do the docking.

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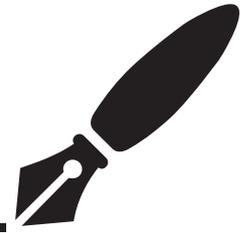
## Variations (continued)

◇ **Immersion:** For the greatest immersive experience, we recommend playing this game in a classroom with stacks of books as currency.

Academic empires are represented, in this instance, by structures made of books. (Game-makers cannot be held responsible for loss of life or limb due to book tower collapse.)

◇ **Do It Yourself:** We've included lots of blank cards. Use them to introduce your own titles and concepts, and chuck the ones that don't work for you. You can play with actual thesis titles from your department, and if you want to be pedantic about it (we hope you don't) you can even use it to test knowledge you've accumulated over the course of the semester.

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## Card Guide



**CONCEPT**

**concept title**

**CONCEPT CREATOR**



**THESIS**

**Thesis  
Title**

Any card that features this symbol requires you to write your own thesis title or concept.

