TRADITIONAL THESIS STRUCTURE

Cover page
Front page signed off by student and supervisor
Abstract: Sums up what was done in the research.
Acknowledgements: Thanks supervisors and others (don't forget to acknowledge sources of funding).
Preface: Declares originality, lists prior publications on topic.
Table of contents, figures and tables usually comes next.

1. INTRODUCTION (SHORT INTRODUCTIONS ARE SUSPECT)
Sets research in context (gives background).
Gives **general aims and scope of project**.
Introduces main themes of the research.
Defines any key terms or concepts.
States value of research.
Mentions any new contribution to knowledge.
Gives overview of thesis.
(Items are not necessarily in this order.)

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
Explores literature relating to the topic, including previous studies. Usually ends with **research questions** (i.e. seeks answers the literature/other research hasn't provided). The **research questions should be related to the general aims** mentioned in Ch1, but should refine these down to specific issues.

3. ORIENTATION/METHODOLOGY (Can be two chapters)
Describes overall research approach and specific methods to be used **to answer the research questions**. The research approach adopted must be congruent with the **general aims and scope of the project**, as well as fitting in with the expressed (or implicit) **beliefs and values** of the researcher. Note that both quantitative and qualitative *methods* can be used within different *approaches*, and do not signal any specific approach. The methods chosen should be suited to the nature and scope of the research questions.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS
Describes data found as a **result of applying methods to answer the research questions**. While general conclusions should not yet be drawn, the data is not presented as raw data, but is analysed first into various categories so that it presents meaningfully, and not just as columns of figures or codes. Graphs, tables and figures should be used so that the significance of the data is clear. Whatever is presented in graphs, tables and figures must also be discussed in the text. The visual aspect helps to present analysis clearly: the reader should not have to interpret visual (or verbal) aspects of illustrative material (the researcher is presenting the analysis, not the reader). **Answers must be provided to the research questions**, and the reader must know which answers fit which questions.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Can be two chapters) (SHORT ENDINGS ARE SUSPECT)
This should fit in with the **general aims** mentioned in the Introduction, where the researcher shows to what extent the **answers to the specific research questions** fulfil the general aims (any further delimitations, extra scope, or problems are mentioned). This chapter should explain the **significance of the findings and conclusions** for the area/field researched, and should suggest further avenues of exploration.

Appendices (usually listed A, B, C)
Glossary (The Glossary may be put in the front of the thesis.)
Bibliography (There are differences of opinion about placement, but I suggest last, as 1. it's easier for readers to flip to this and 2. any references in the Appendices or Glossary must also appear in the Bibliography, so it makes sense to put this last, *after* any references.)