



The importance of reading existing theses



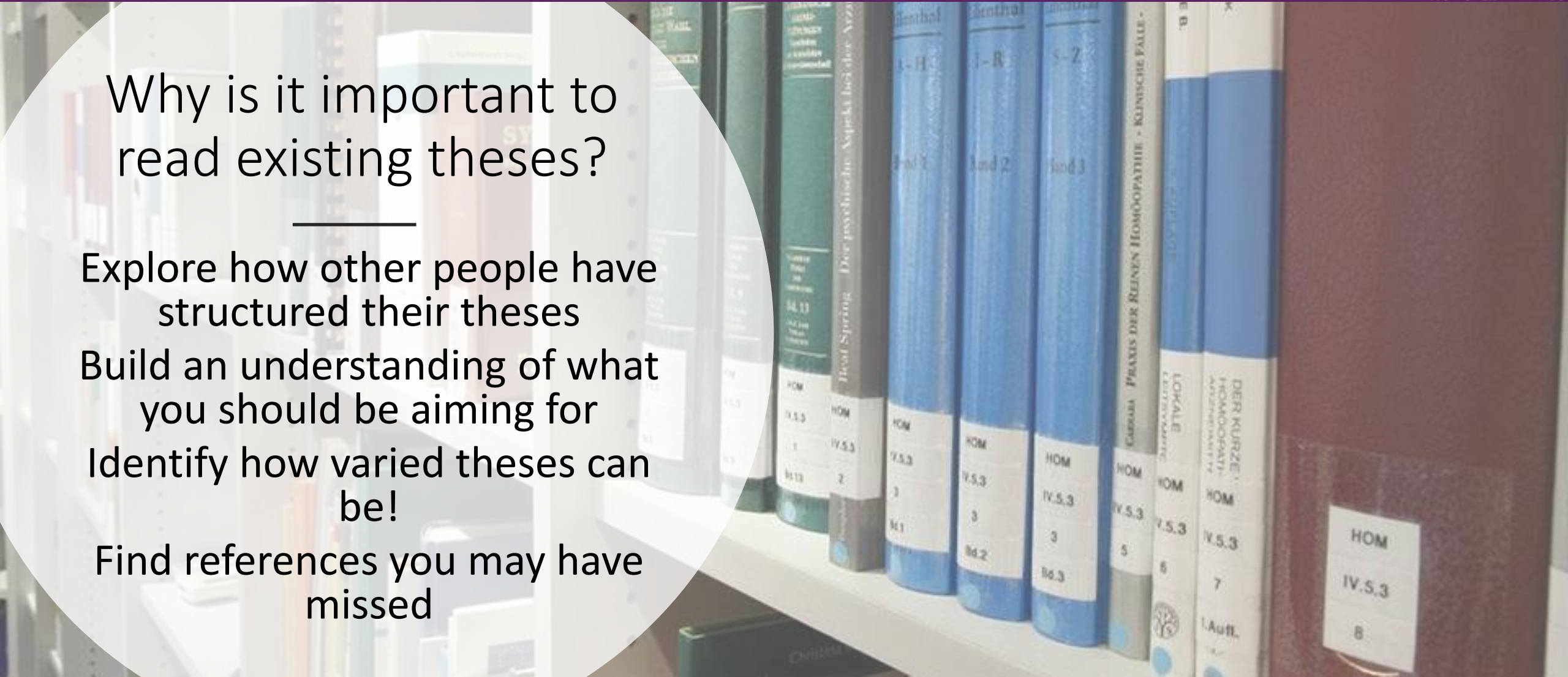
Why is it important to read existing theses?

Explore how other people have structured their theses

Build an understanding of what you should be aiming for

Identify how varied theses can be!

Find references you may have missed

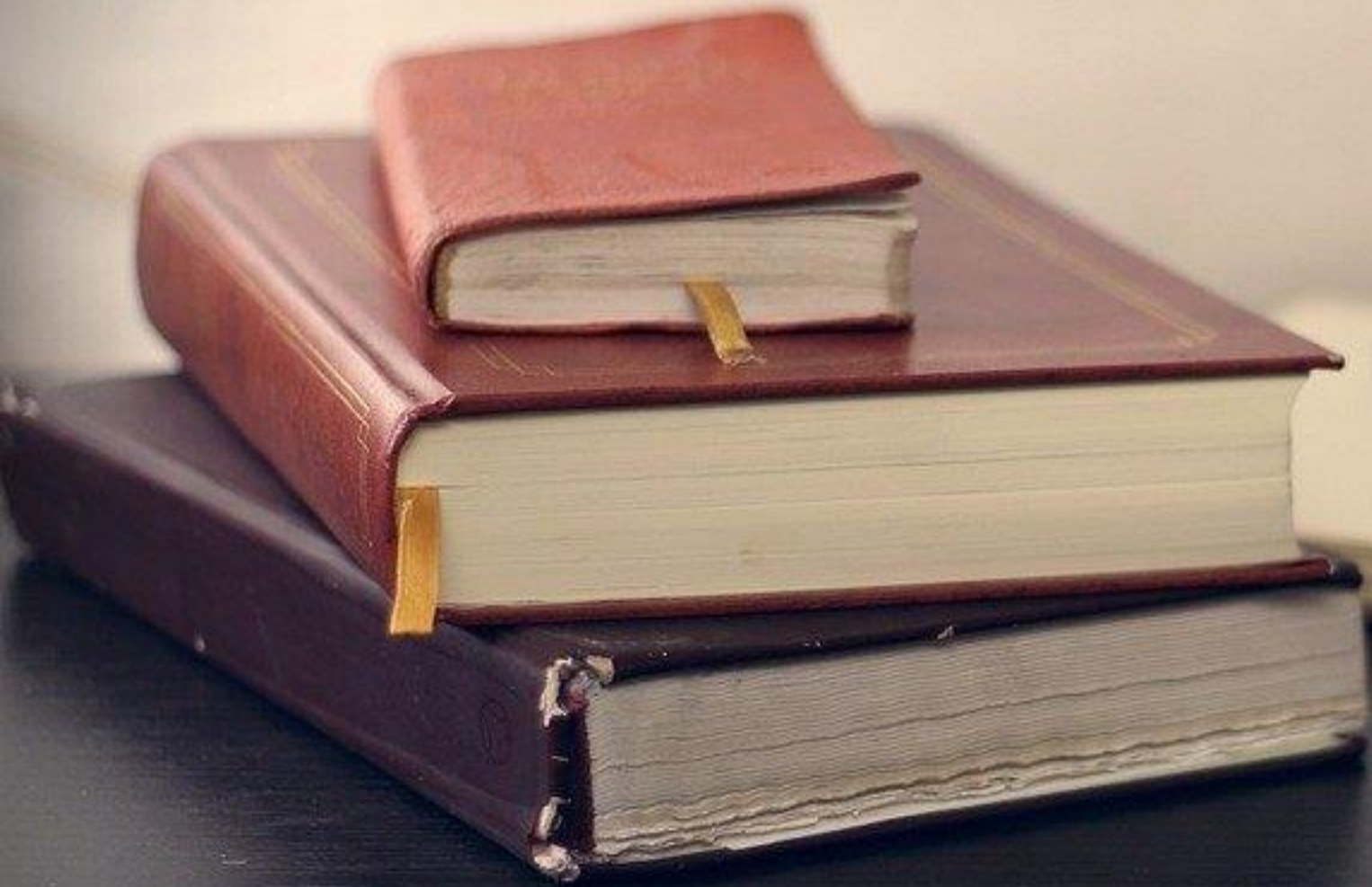


‘Reading other people’s theses is a very useful strategy to help authors focus on what the reader needs, and in this case, that reader will be the examiner. This is one way to draw attention to the elements that distinguish a thesis from other genres. After all, it can be very difficult to write something without a clear sense of what the end-product needs to look like in terms of shape and content’.

Information source:

<https://doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/2018/05/14/reading-theses-to-write-a-thesis/>

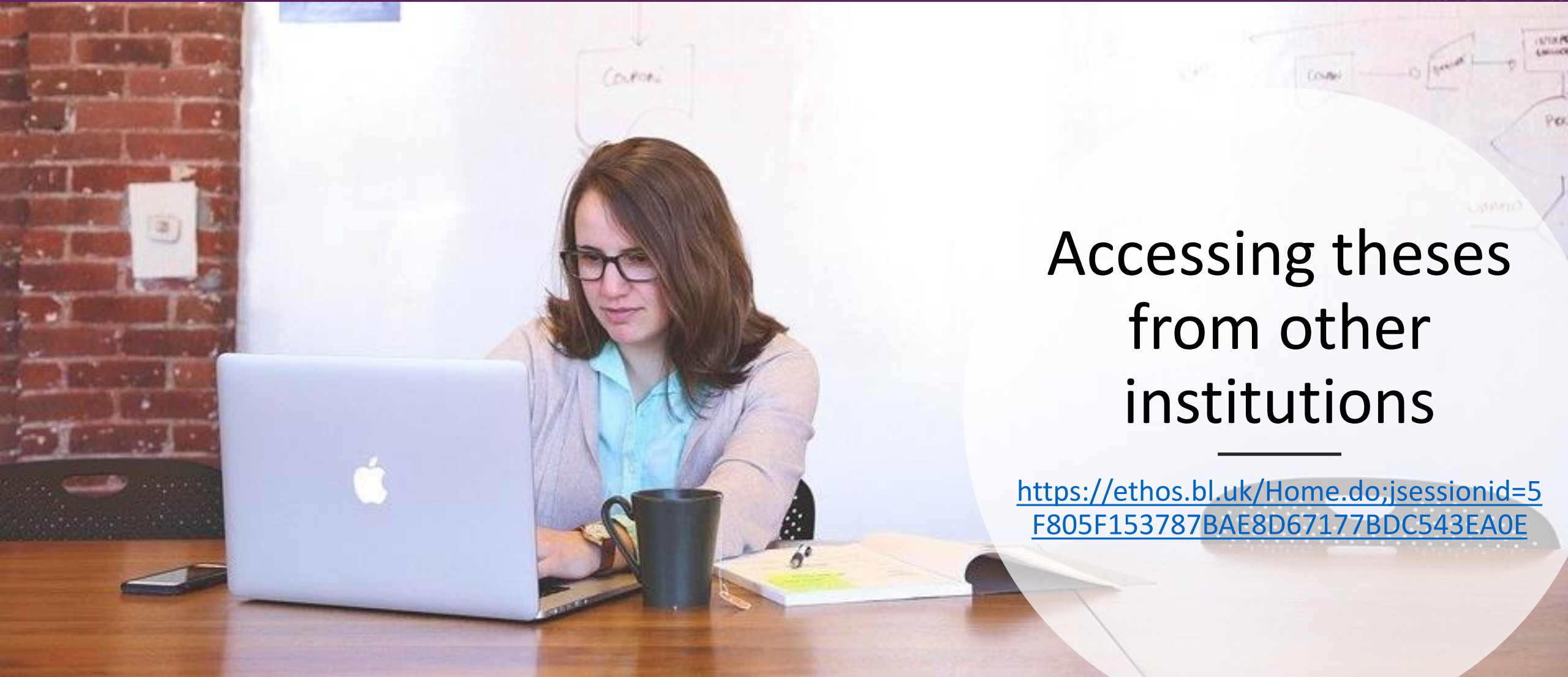




Accessing existing
theses from the
University of Exeter:

<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/>

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Accessing theses from other institutions

<https://ethos.bl.uk/Home.do;jsessionid=5F805F153787BAE8D67177BDC543EA0E>

Activity

Download a thesis relevant to your research and map out its structure

Is it perfectly written?
Probably not! Use this as reassurance that your own does not need to be perfect



Activity: Analyse some existing theses

How long is it?

What is the title? Compare it to your own – is it narrower or broader than yours?

Use the abstract to see how it provides an overview of the research

What data did they use?

How did they gather/analyse their findings?

What conclusions have they drawn?

How is it structured?

Is it clear that the research offers a novel contribution to their area of interest?



Activity: Analyse some existing theses

What does the table of contents contain?

- How many chapters are there?
 - How long is each chapter?

How are figures/tables used?

- Why have they been used?
 - How many are there?
- How much information is contained in the captions?

How have the references and bibliography been presented?

- How many references are used?

Is there an appendix?

- If so, what does it add to the thesis?

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/doing-research/doing-a-doctorate/completing-your-doctorate/writing-and-submitting-your-doctoral-thesis/getting-started>





Remember: no thesis is the same!

There are multiple ways of writing a good thesis.
It is, therefore, important to read multiple theses
to get an idea of where the consistencies lie