

Gradus

Your path, your thesis.

User Guide

Version 0.11 · macOS, Windows, Linux

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01

Welcome to Gradus

Gradus is a free program for writing your thesis on macOS, Windows and Linux. It brings everything you need into one window: the text divided into chapters, notes, sources, images with their licences, the bibliography and export to the formats your university requires.

What it does for you

- ✓ **Keeps the text consistent.** Paste from Word, PDFs, web pages and e-mails: stray fonts, colours and sizes are removed and the text takes the font chosen for the thesis.
- ✓ **Keeps the structure in order.** Chapters, sections, figures and notes number themselves and renumber when you move something.
- ✓ **Manages sources.** A DOI, an ISBN or a web address is enough to add a source; citations and bibliography follow the chosen style (Italian humanities, Chicago, APA, MLA, ISO 690).
- ✓ **Checks images.** It finds freely licensed images and writes the attribution in the caption; it flags images whose rights still need checking.
- ✓ **Exports everywhere.** Paginated PDF, Word, website, Markdown and plain text, in one language or all of them.
- ✓ **Writes in several languages.** Write in your language: up to nine other languages update themselves while you write, and you can correct them by hand.

Privacy and working offline

Gradus needs no account and works without a connection. Your thesis stays on your computer, in a single file with the `.gradus` extension. The network is used only when you ask for it: to search for free images, to fetch a source's details from a DOI, ISBN or web address, to open external links and, if you add other languages to the thesis, for machine translation.

Licence and contact

Gradus is free and distributed under the **PolyForm Strict License 1.0.0**: you may use it for any noncommercial purpose (study, research, theses, personal use) and in schools, universities and nonprofit organisations; commercial use, redistribution, modifications and derivative works are not permitted. The summary and full text are in **Settings → App** and in the website's legal notice.

For questions, bugs or suggestions use the form on the website's **Contact** page (https://gradus-xi-seven.vercel.app/en/contact.html): choose the reason, write your message and, if needed, attach a screenshot, a PDF or your thesis file up to 3 MB. Your email is used only to reply to you.

02

Installation

Download the file for your system from the website. All versions are free and have the same features.

SYSTEM	FILE	REQUIREMENTS
macOS	`Gradus_0.12.1_universal.dmg`	macOS 11 or later, Apple and Intel processors
Windows	`Gradus_0.12.1_x64-setup.exe`	64-bit Windows 10 or 11
Linux (Ubuntu, Debian, Mint)	`Gradus_0.12.1_amd64.deb`	Ubuntu 22.04 or later
Linux (Fedora, openSUSE)	`Gradus-0.12.1-1.x86_64.rpm`	Fedora 38 or later
Linux (any)	`Gradus_0.12.1_amd64.AppImage`	any 64-bit distribution

macOS

1. Open the `.dmg` file and drag **Gradus** into the **Applications** folder.
2. On first launch macOS may warn that the app comes from an unidentified developer. Open **System Settings → Privacy & Security** and click **Open Anyway**, or right-click the Gradus icon and choose **Open**.
3. From the second launch on, Gradus opens normally.

Windows

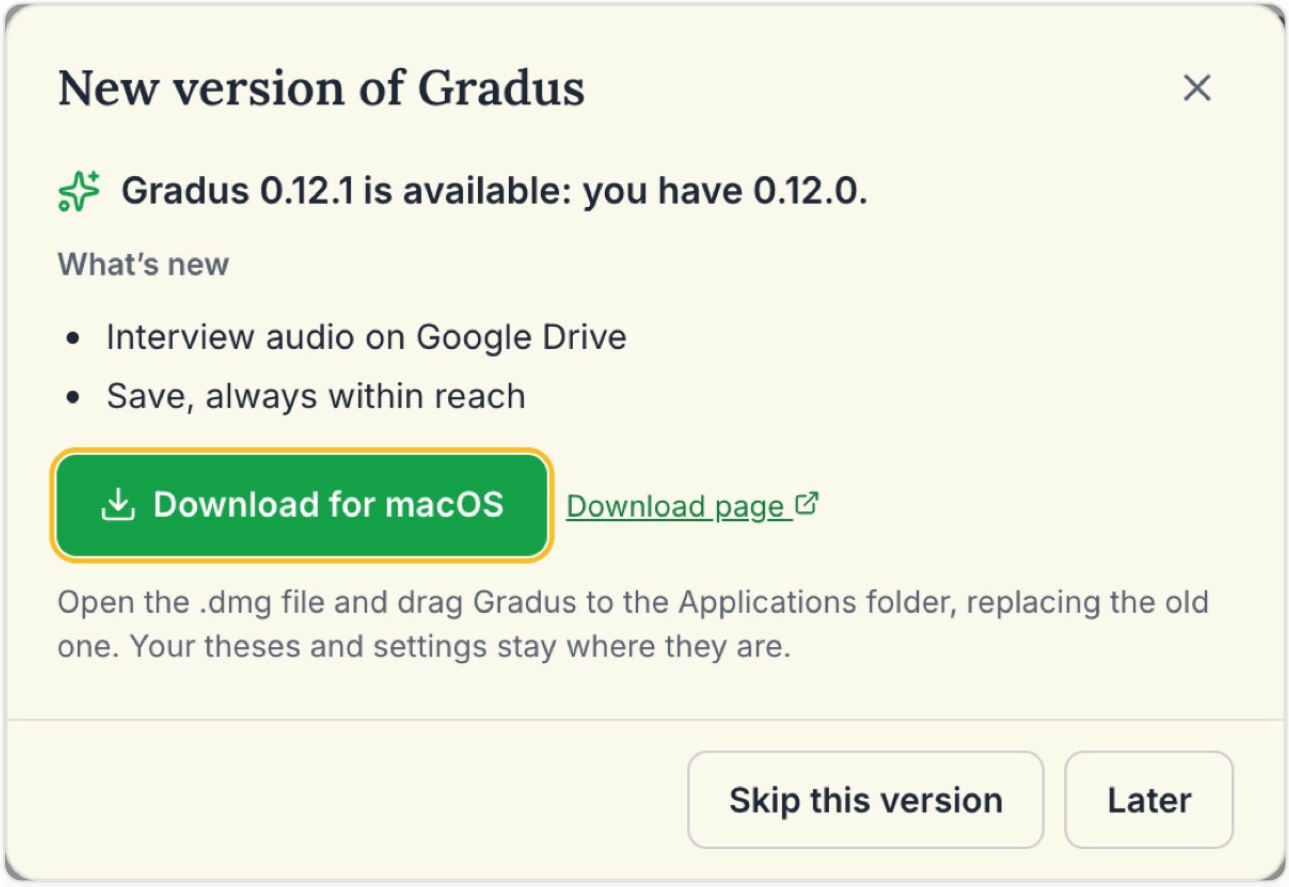
1. Run `Gradus_0.12.1_x64-setup.exe`. It installs for the current user only and does not need administrator rights.
2. If the blue Windows SmartScreen window appears (“Windows protected your PC”), click **More info** and then **Run anyway**.
3. If the Microsoft WebView2 component is missing (rare on up-to-date Windows 10 and 11), the installer downloads it automatically.

Linux

- **Ubuntu, Debian, Mint:** `sudo apt install ./Gradus_0.12.1_amd64.deb`
- **Fedora, openSUSE:** `sudo dnf install ./Gradus-0.12.1-1.x86_64.rpm`
- **AppImage:** make the file executable (`chmod +x Gradus_0.12.1_amd64.AppImage`) and double-click it. Some distributions need the `libfuse2` package.

Why the security warnings? macOS and Windows show a warning for apps distributed without a paid signing certificate. Gradus contains nothing other than the file you downloaded from the official website.

Updates

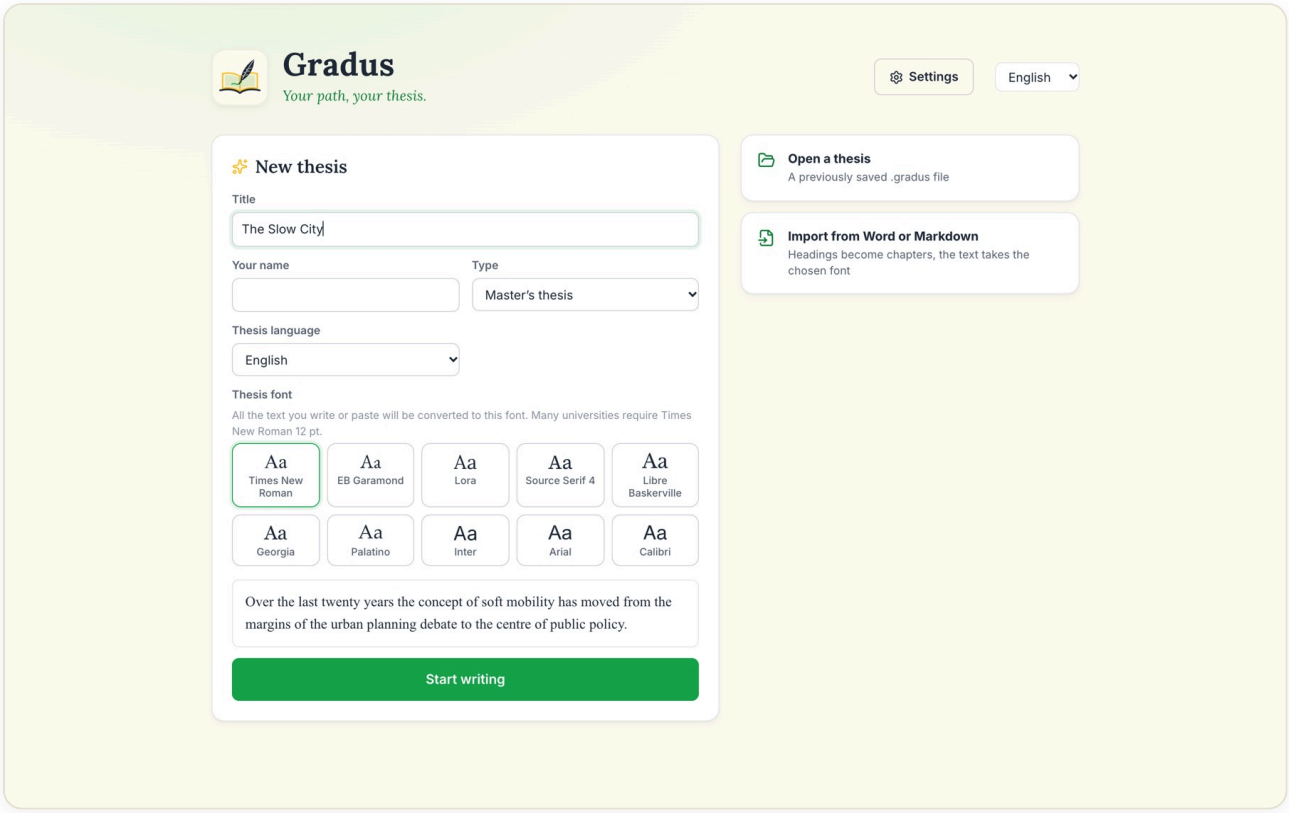


The new-version notice.

When a new version comes out, Gradus shows a notice at startup with what's new and a button to download it for your system. Install it over the current one: theses and settings stay where they are. **Later** closes the notice until the next start; **Skip this version** stops offering it. Gradus checks at startup and once a day, reading only the latest version number from the website and sending no data. In **Settings → App → Updates** you can turn the notice off or press **Check now**.

03

Your first thesis



The welcome screen.

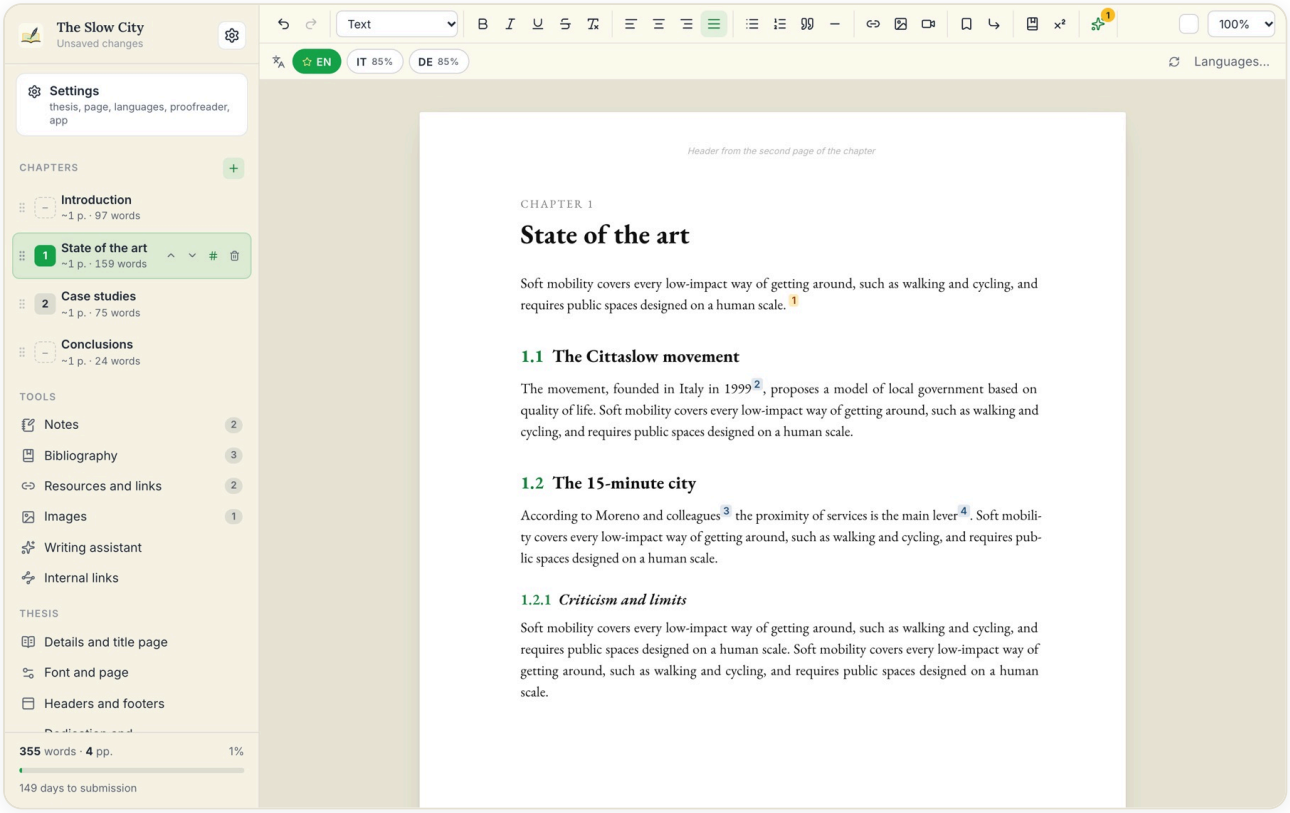
When it starts, Gradus shows the welcome screen. From here you can:

- **Choose the app language** from the menu at the top right: Italian, English, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian or Arabic.
- **Create a new thesis**: enter title, name, thesis type, the **language you write it in** and, above all, the **font**. Many universities require Times New Roman 12 pt; Garamond, Lora, Source Serif and Libre Baskerville are included in the app and work on any computer. You can change everything later.
- **Open a thesis** saved earlier (`.gradus` file) or one of the recently opened ones.
- **Import from Word or Markdown**: top-level headings become chapters, images go into the image manager and the text takes the chosen font. Introduction, Conclusions and Bibliography are recognised as unnumbered chapters.
- **Resume** the last thesis from the automatic backup copy, if it was closed without saving.

A new thesis starts with three chapters: Introduction and Conclusions (unnumbered) and First chapter, with titles in the thesis language.

04

The workspace

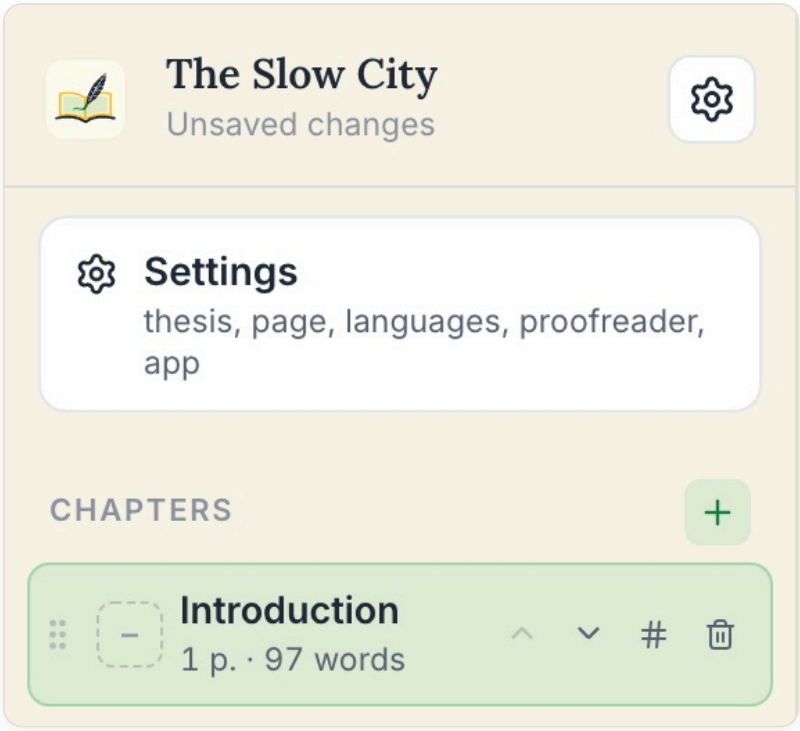


The sidebar on the left, the page with the open chapter in the centre.

The sidebar

- **At the top**: the thesis title and save status. A click opens the title page details.
- **Chapters**: the list of chapters with number, pages and words.
- **Tools**: Notes, Bibliography, Resources and links, Images, Internal links. Each opens a panel next to the sidebar.
- **Thesis**: details and title page, font and page, headers, dedication and acknowledgements, goals, statistics.
- **File**: save, open, import, print, draft export, Typesetting, focus mode and theme (automatic, light, dark).
- **At the bottom**: total words and pages, progress towards the goal and days to submission.

Settings

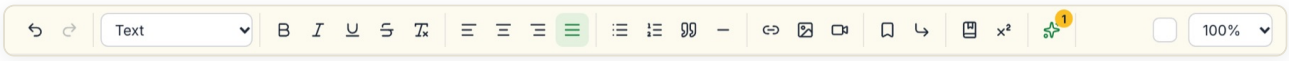


The Settings button at the top of the sidebar.

All settings open from the **Settings** button at the top of the sidebar, the gear next to the thesis title, **File → Settings...** or ⌘, / Ctrl+,. The tabs are: Details and title page, Font and page, Headers, Bibliography, Dedication and acknowledgements, Goals, Languages, Proofreader and assistant, App. On the welcome screen too, without opening a thesis, the **Settings** button leads to the app language, services and proofreader.

Above the page, if the thesis has several languages, the **language bar** appears (chapter “App and thesis languages”).

The formatting toolbar



Undo, Redo	Undoes or redoes the last change.
Paragraph style	Text, Section (1.1), Subsection (1.1.1). Numbers update themselves.
Bold, italic, underline, strikethrough	Character formatting; the eraser clears all formatting.
Alignment	Left, centre, right, justified (default).
Lists, quotation, line	Bulleted and numbered lists, block quotation, divider line.
Link, image, video	External link, image panel, YouTube video or link to a video.
Bookmark, Cross-reference	A point to refer to and the reference itself (“see § 2.1”).
Cite, Note	Citation of a source, footnote.
Paper colour, zoom	The small square shows the paper colour and opens its settings; zoom goes from 75 to 150%.

05

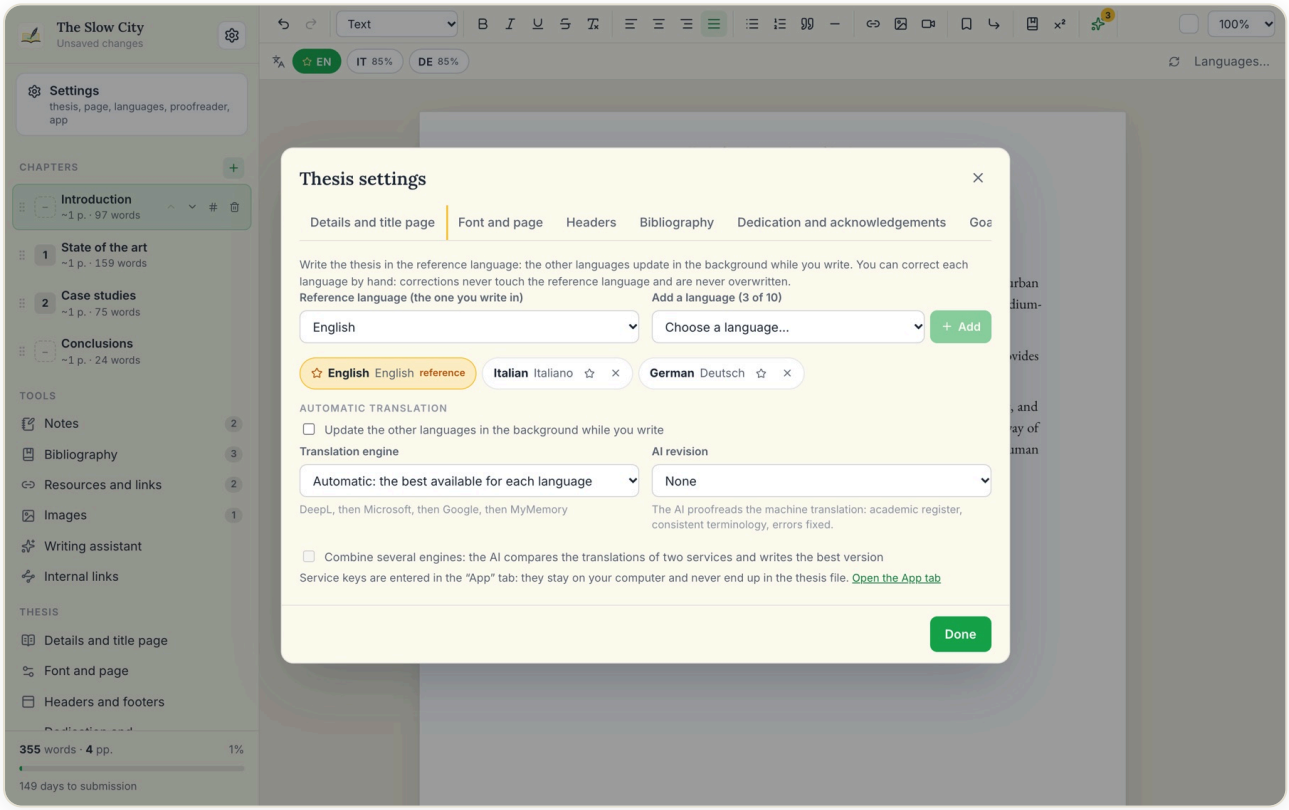
App and thesis languages

The app language

Gradus menus, windows and messages are available in **Italian, English, German, Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and Arabic**; this guide also exists in all eight languages. Choose the language from the menu on the welcome screen or from **Settings → App**. In Arabic the interface is laid out right to left.

The app language does not change the thesis: titles, text and notes stay as you wrote them.

A thesis in several languages

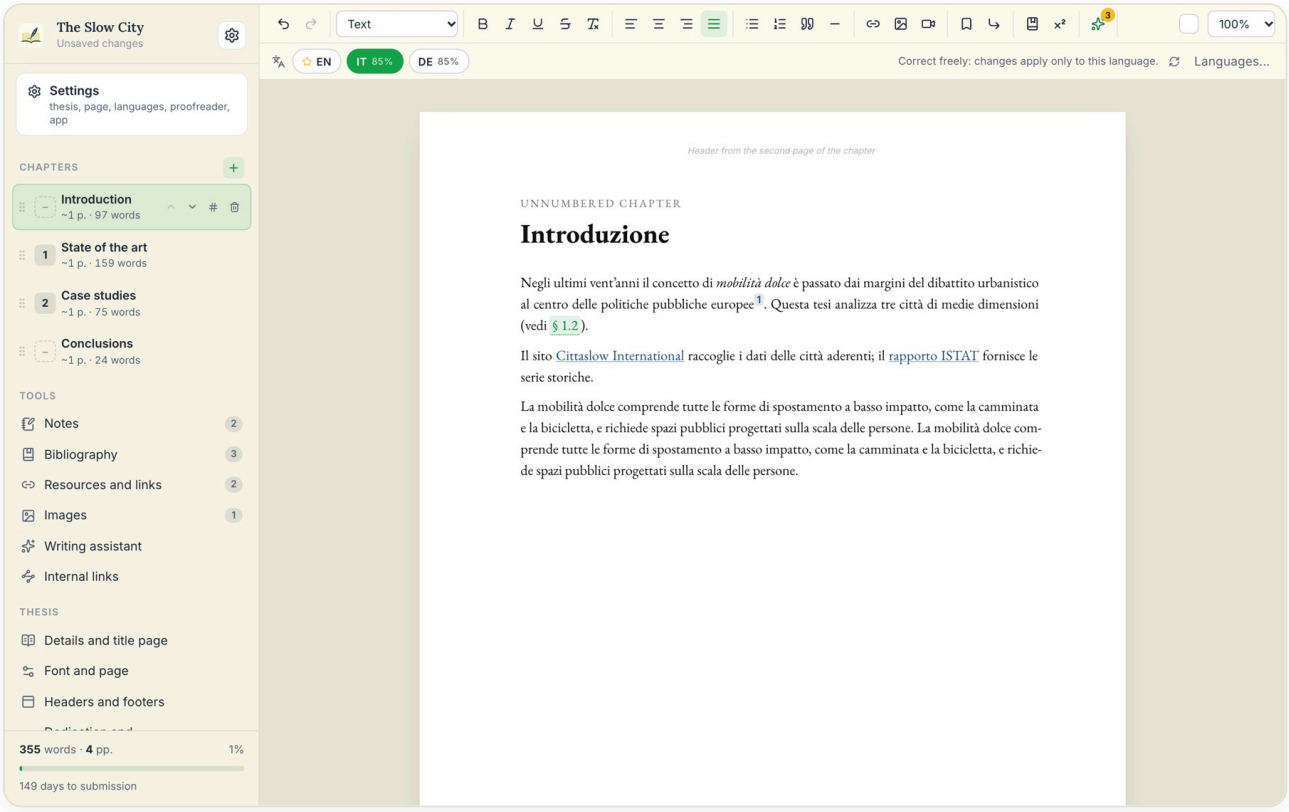


Settings → Languages: reference language, added languages and translation service.

Every thesis has a **reference language**, the one you write in. In **Settings → Languages** you can add up to nine more, choosing from the list of all the world's languages (ten languages in total). From then on:

- while you write in the reference language, the other languages **update themselves in the background**, paragraph by paragraph, including chapter titles, notes, captions and title page details;
- only the paragraphs you change are translated again, not the whole thesis;
- formatting, citations, notes, cross-references and links stay in place in the translations too.

The language bar



Above the page, one button per language with the percentage translated.

Above the page there is a button for each language. The reference language has a star; the others show the percentage already translated, a spinner while translation is running and a warning if there is an error. A click switches from one language to another; the circular button translates the missing parts straight away.

Correcting a translation by hand

In a secondary language you can write freely on the page. Every paragraph you correct:

- applies only to that language: **the reference language does not change**;
- is no longer overwritten by machine translation;
- if you later change the same paragraph in the reference language, it is marked **to review** (orange border) so that you can decide whether to update it.

The **Make reference language** button swaps the reference language with another one: nothing is lost, the old text becomes a hand-corrected translation.

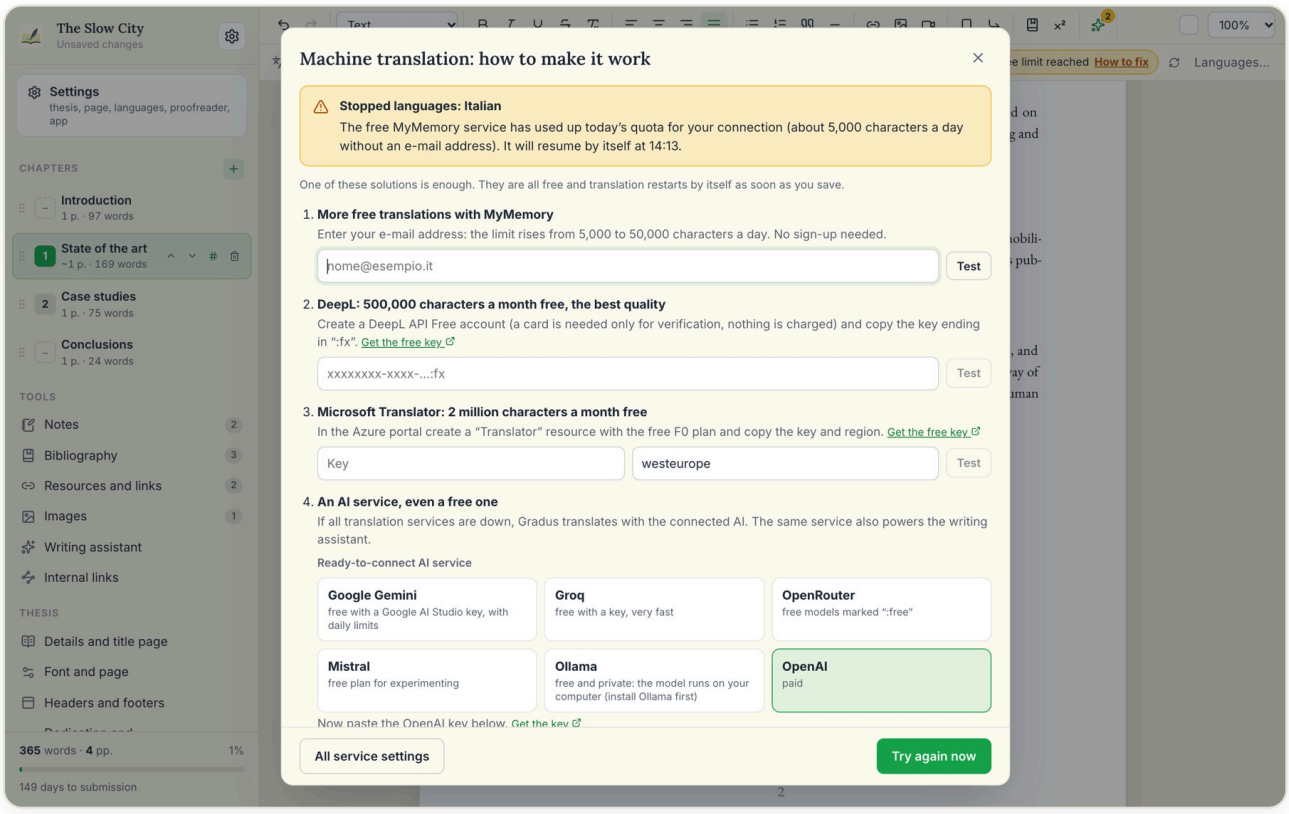
Translation services

SERVICE	HOW TO USE IT
MyMemory	Works straight away, free and without a key, with a daily limit (higher if you enter an e-mail address).
DeepL	The best quality for European languages. Free key up to 500,000 characters per month.
Microsoft Translator	Over 130 languages. Free key up to 2 million characters per month.
Google Cloud Translation	Over 130 languages, with an API key.

In **Automatic** mode Gradus uses the best available service for each language. You can add an **AI revision** (Anthropic's Claude or an OpenAI-compatible service): the AI proofreads the translation for academic register and consistent terminology. With **Combine several engines** the AI compares the translations of two services and writes the best version.

Keys are entered in **Settings → App**, where the **Test** button checks that they work. They are kept in a settings file on your computer, not in the thesis file. The text to translate is sent to the service you choose.

If translation stops



The window "Machine translation: how to make it work".

If a language does not update, a yellow warning appears above the page, for example *Translation stopped: today's free limit reached*. The most common reason is the limit of MyMemory, the free no-key service: about 5,000 characters a day per connection, too few for a thesis. Click **How to fix**: the window explains the cause and offers free solutions you can enter right there:

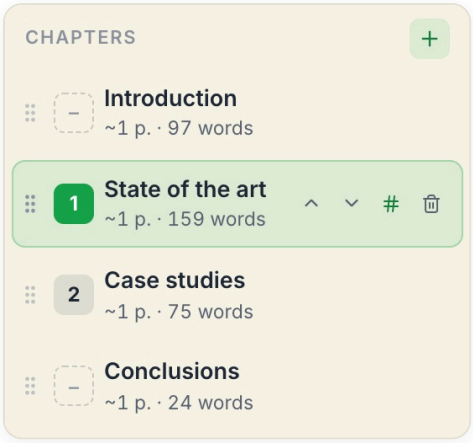
1. your e-mail for MyMemory (limit raised to 50,000 characters a day);
2. a free DeepL key (500,000 characters a month);
3. a free Microsoft Translator key (2 million characters a month);
4. an AI service, even a free one: if the other services are down, Gradus translates with the AI.

As soon as you save a solution, translation restarts by itself. If a service does not respond, Gradus automatically moves on to the next one.

> **Exporting in several languages.** Print, draft export and Typesetting have a language selector; export can also produce all languages at once (chapter "Draft export").

06

Chapters



- **Add**: the **+** button inserts a chapter after the open one.
- **Rename**: type the title directly on the page, above the text.
- **Move**: drag the chapter by the handle on the left, or use the up and down arrows. Numbering, table of contents and all cross-references update immediately.
- **Numbered titles**: if a title contains the chapter number ("First chapter", "Chapter 2 – Method", "3. Results"), when you move, add or remove a chapter the number in the title follows the new position. Other titles do not change.
- **Number or not**: the **#** button excludes a chapter from numbering, as is usual for Introduction and Conclusions.
- **Delete**: the bin, with confirmation.

Pages and words

Next to each chapter you see words and pages. The **~** symbol means an **estimate** based on font, size and line spacing. When you open the PDF preview, Gradus measures the real pages and the estimate is replaced by the exact number until you edit the text.

Notes, citations and cross-references do not count as words. In Chinese and Japanese each character counts as one word.

07

Writing and pasting

The page in the centre follows the thesis paper size, margins, font, size and line spacing. Header and footer appear at the top and bottom as they will be printed.

Pasting from any source

When you paste text from Word, Google Docs, PDFs or a web page, Gradus:

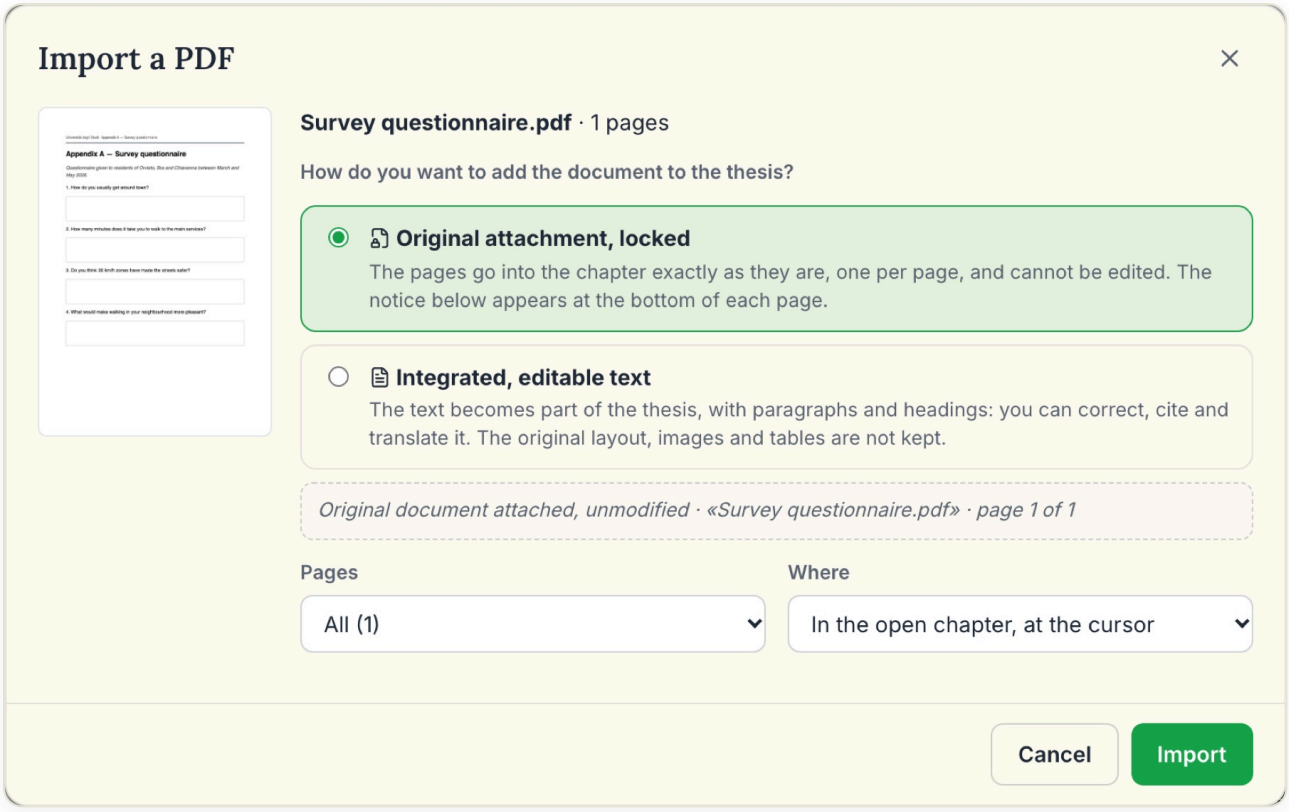
- removes fonts, colours, sizes and backgrounds, so the text takes the thesis font;
- keeps bold, italic, underline, links, lists and headings;
- turns top-level headings into sections and smaller ones into subsections;
- adds pasted images to the image manager, marked as “to check”.

Numbered sections

Choose **Section (1.1)** or **Subsection (1.1.1)** in the styles menu. Do not type the numbers yourself: Gradus adds them and keeps them up to date.

> **Importing a thesis you have already started.** With **File → Import Word, Markdown** you can add the chapters of an existing document. Manual heading numbers (“2.1”, “Chapter 3”) are removed, because from now on Gradus takes care of them.

Importing a PDF

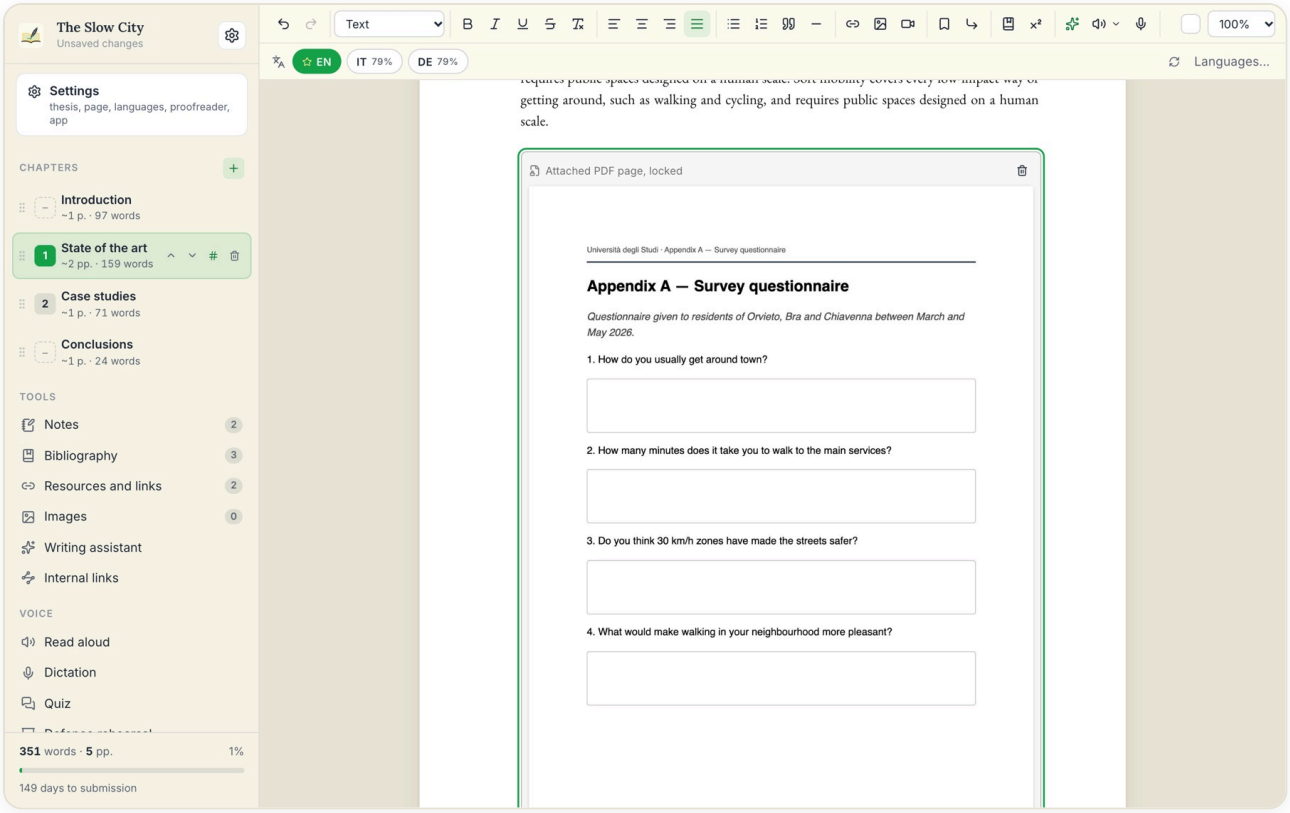


The choice when importing: locked original attachment or editable text.

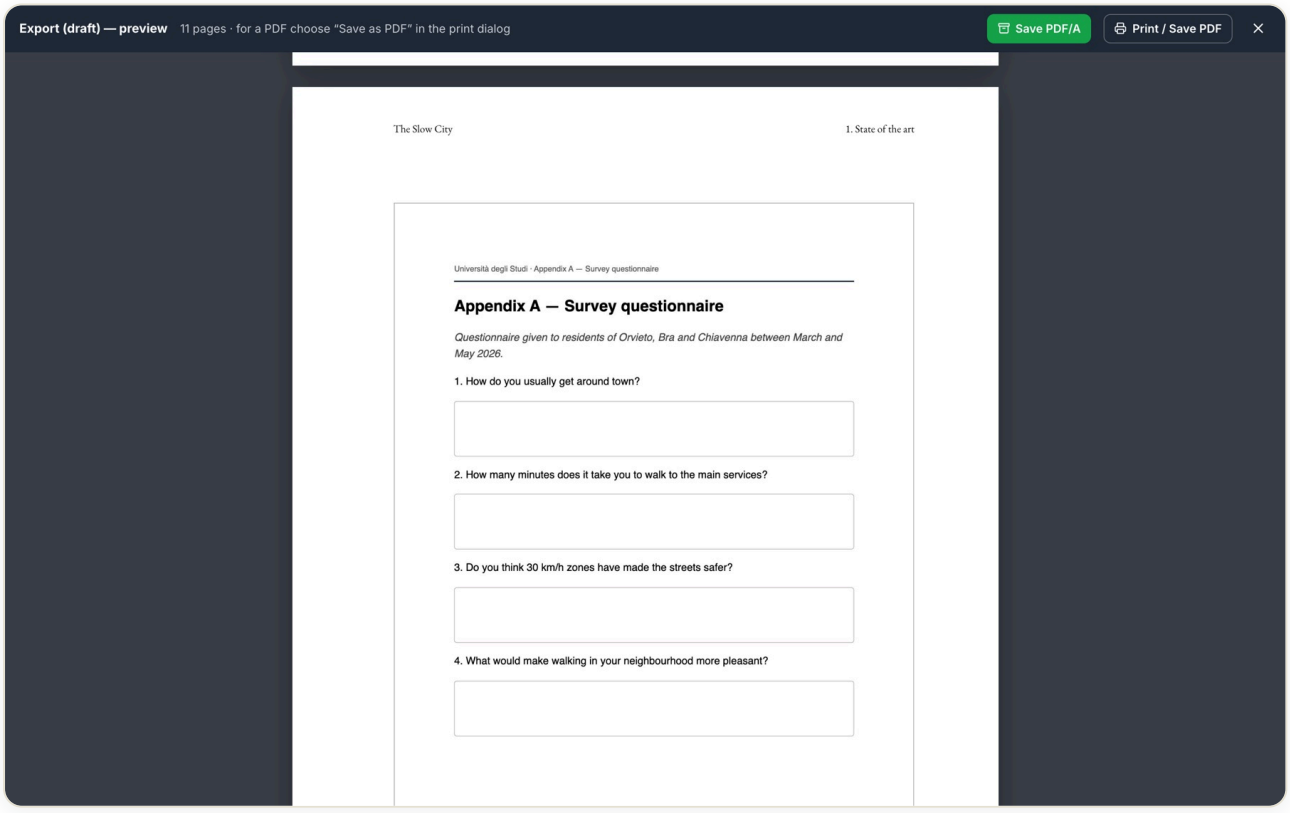
From **File → Import Word, PDF, Markdown...** choose a PDF file: Gradus asks how to add it to the thesis.

- **Original attachment, locked**: each page of the PDF goes into the chapter exactly as it is, on a full page, and cannot be edited or deleted by mistake (it can only be removed with the page's bin button). At the bottom of each page appears the notice *"Original document attached, unmodified · file name · page 2 of 5 · SHA-256 ..."*, in the language of the exported document. The SHA-256 fingerprint identifies the original file, which stays stored inside the thesis file.
- **Integrated, editable text**: the PDF's text becomes paragraphs and headings of the thesis, to correct, cite and translate. Repeated headers and page numbers are removed; the original layout, images and tables are not kept. A scanned PDF contains no text: it can only be attached.

You can import all pages or only some, into the open chapter (at the cursor) or into a new chapter. From the start screen, a PDF creates a new thesis with editable text.



An attached page in the chapter, with the notice at the bottom.



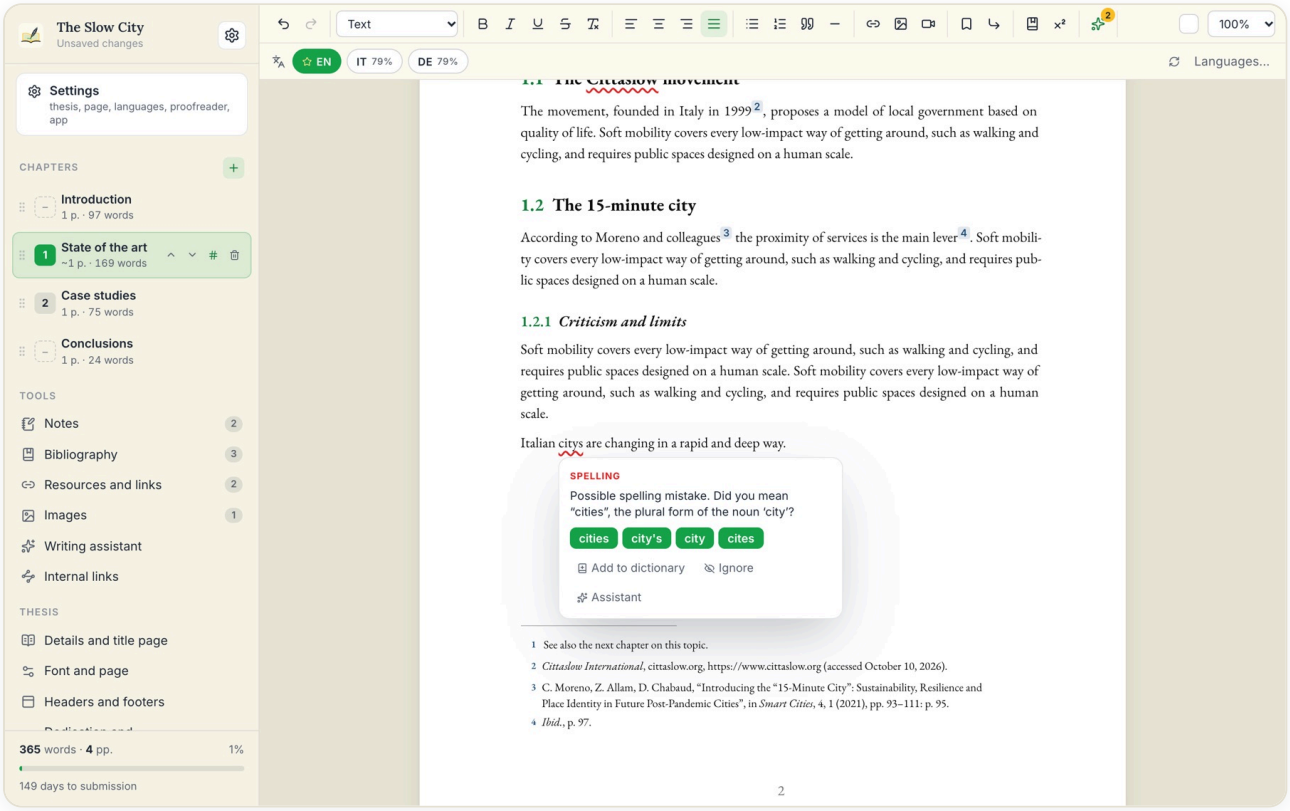
In the print preview and in the PDF each attached page fills a whole page.

08

Proofreader and writing assistant

As you write, Gradus underlines spelling, grammar and style issues and, in the **Assistant** panel, suggests synonyms, antonyms, idioms, rephrased sentences and advice to strengthen your ideas, in every language of the thesis.

The proofreader



An underlined word and the suggested corrections.

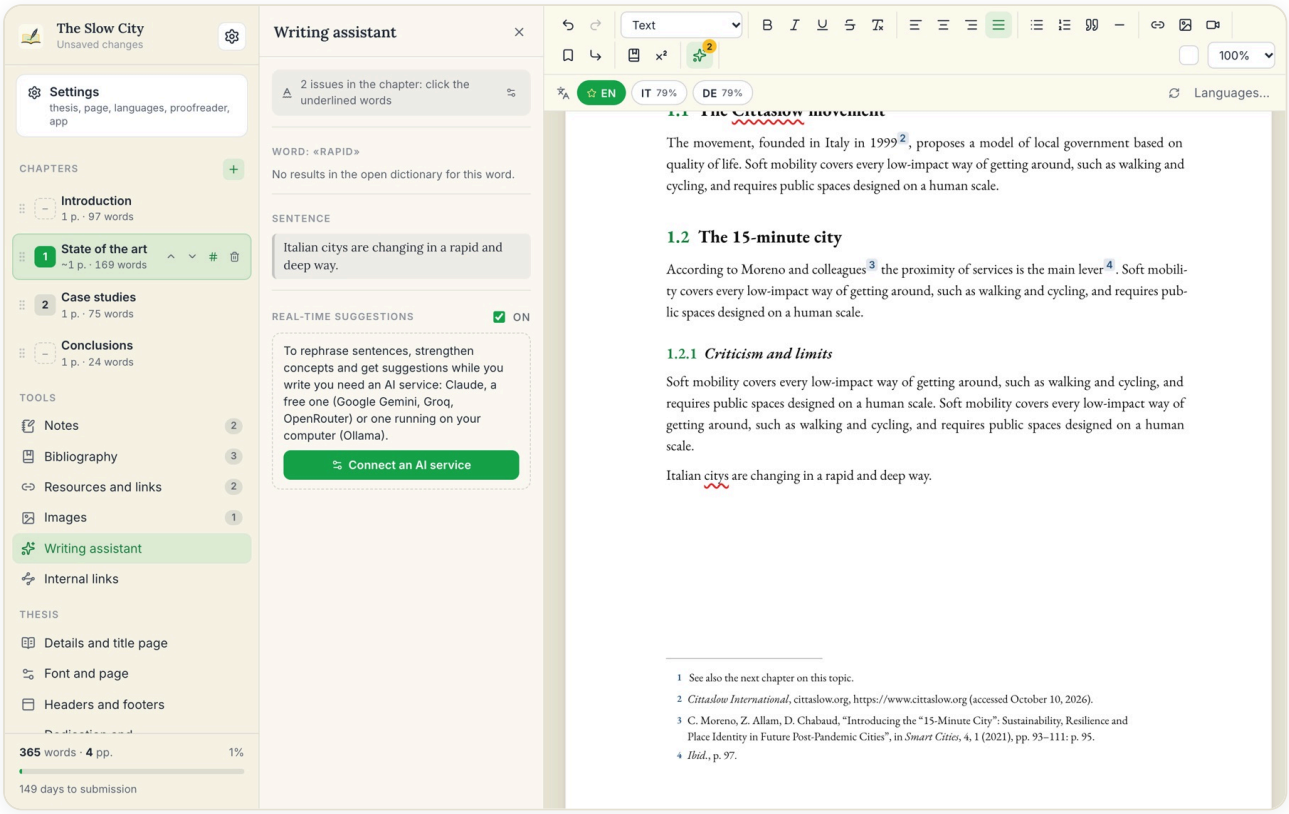
The default proofreader is **LanguageTool**: free, no key, it checks spelling, grammar, punctuation and style in over 30 languages, Arabic included; for Chinese and Japanese there are few checks and the AI assistant is the better choice. A few seconds after you stop typing, the parts to review are underlined:

- **wavy red**: spelling;
- **wavy blue**: grammar;
- **dotted orange**: style and repetitions.

Clicking the underlined part opens the corrections: click a suggestion to apply it. **Add to dictionary** stops flagging the word (a proper name, a technical term); **Ignore** hides the issue for this session. The proofreader follows the language you are viewing: in a secondary language it checks the translation.

In **Settings → Proofreader and assistant** you can choose the system spell checker (spelling only, offline) or turn it off. With LanguageTool paragraphs are sent to languagetool.org to be checked.

The assistant: synonyms, antonyms, idioms and suggestions



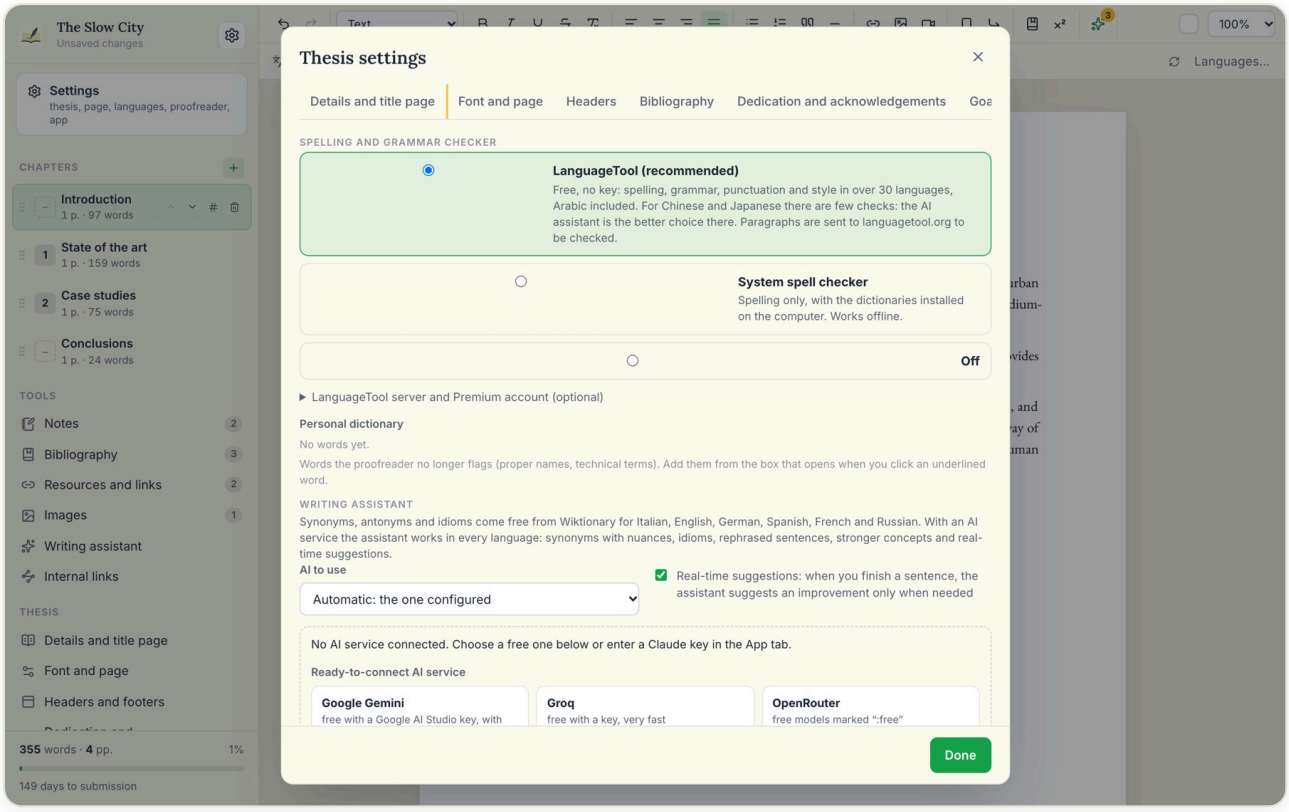
The Assistant panel follows the cursor: word, sentence and paragraph.

Open the panel with the **Assistant** button on the formatting toolbar (or ⌘⇧A / Ctrl+Shift+A, or Tools → Writing assistant). Click a word or inside a sentence: the panel shows

- **Word**: synonyms and antonyms (one click replaces the word in the text, keeping the capital letter) plus idioms and expressions. For Italian, English, German, Spanish, French and Russian they come free from Wiktionary; with AI they come in every language, with usage nuances;
- **Sentence**: *How to improve the sentence* suggests up to three clearer, more precise versions, each with the reason. **Replace** puts it in the text;
- **Concept**: *How to strengthen the paragraph's concept* sums up the idea, gives supervisor-style advice (missing definitions, sources to add, logical steps) and proposes an improved version of the paragraph;
- **Real-time suggestions**: when you finish a sentence, the assistant rereads it and, only when it really helps, proposes an improvement with the reason. **Apply** inserts it, **Ignore** discards it. Turn them on and off from the panel.

Parts that contain citations, notes or cross-references are not replaced automatically, so that nothing is lost: copy the suggestion and edit by hand.

Connecting an AI (even a free one)



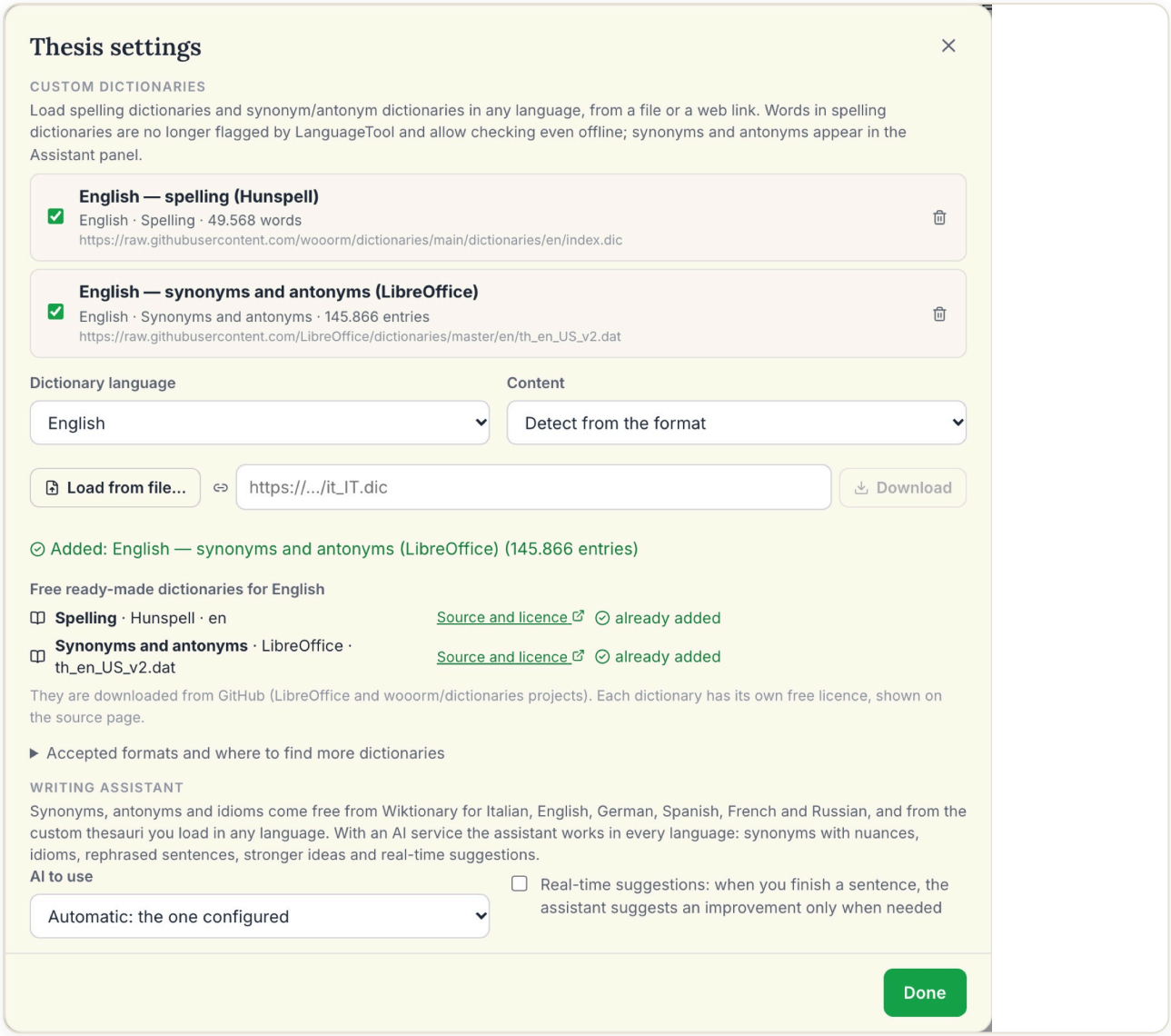
Settings → Proofreader and assistant.

Rephrased sentences, concepts and real-time suggestions need an AI service. In **Settings → App** or **Proofreader and assistant** choose a ready-made service and paste the key:

Google Gemini	free with a Google AI Studio key, with daily limits
Groq	free with a key, very fast
OpenRouter	free models marked ":free"
Mistral	free plan for experimenting
Ollama	free and private: the model runs on your computer
Claude (Anthropic)	paid, the highest quality

The **Test** button checks that the service responds. The same service improves translations and translates when the other services are down.

Custom dictionaries



Settings → Proofreader and assistant: loaded dictionaries and the free ones ready for the language.

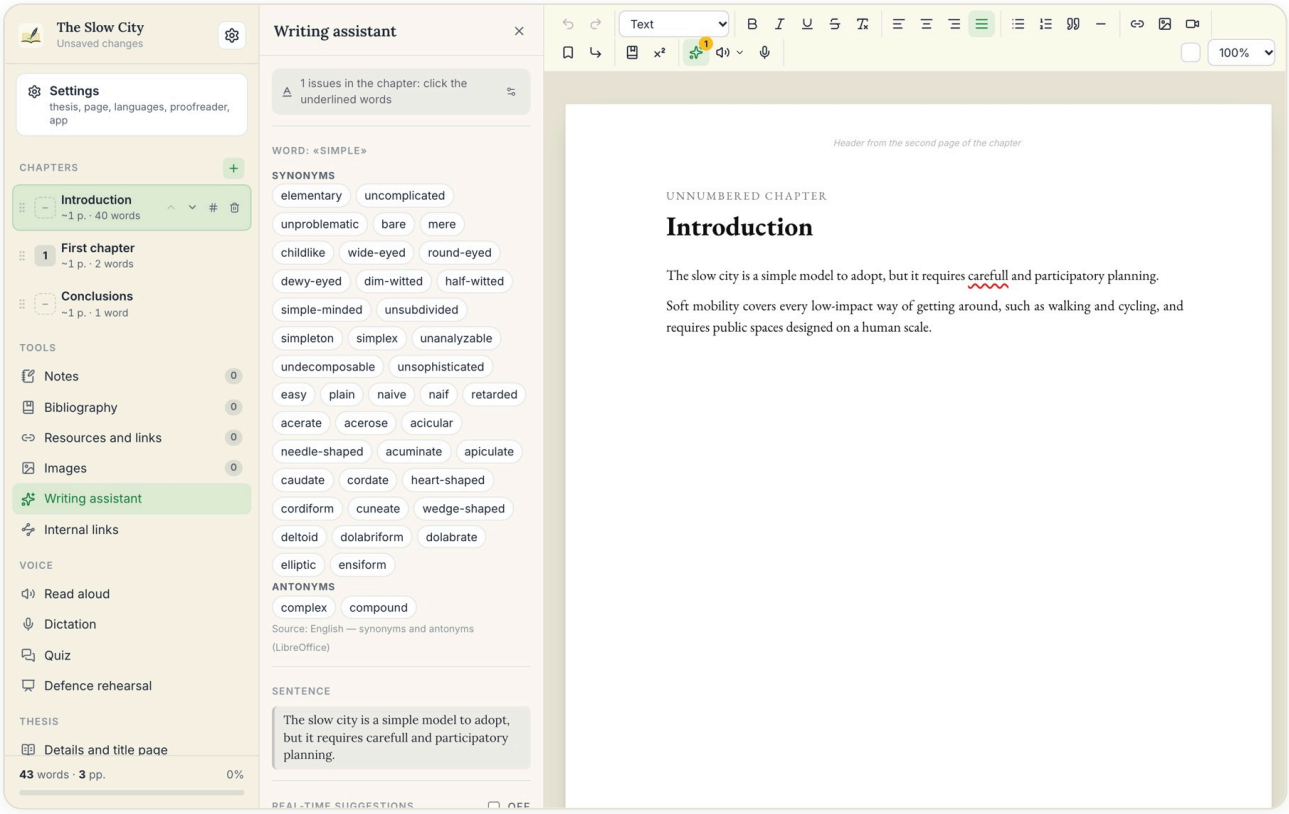
In **Settings → Proofreader and assistant → Custom dictionaries** you can load **spelling** dictionaries and **synonym and antonym** dictionaries in any language:

- **Free ready-made dictionaries**: choose the language and press **Add**; Gradus downloads Hunspell dictionaries (wooorm/dictionaries) and LibreOffice thesauri. The *Source and licence* link shows the authors and licence of each.
- **Load from file...**: Hunspell dictionaries (`.dic` + `.aff`; choosing the `.dic` is enough if the `.aff` is in the same folder), LibreOffice and Firefox extensions (`.oxt`, `.xpi`, `.zip`), MyThes thesauri (`.dat`), `.csv` / `.tsv` tables (*word;synonyms;antonyms*), synonym lists (*quick, fast, rapid* or *car ⇒ automobile, motor car*), word lists and JSON.
- **Web link**: paste the address of a file and press **Download**; from a GitHub page Gradus takes the raw version by itself, and for a `.dic` it also downloads the `.aff` next to it.

First choose the **dictionary language** and, if needed, the **content** (detected from the format, spelling, synonyms and antonyms, antonyms only). Each dictionary can be switched off with its checkbox or deleted with the bin; dictionaries stay on your computer and apply to all theses.

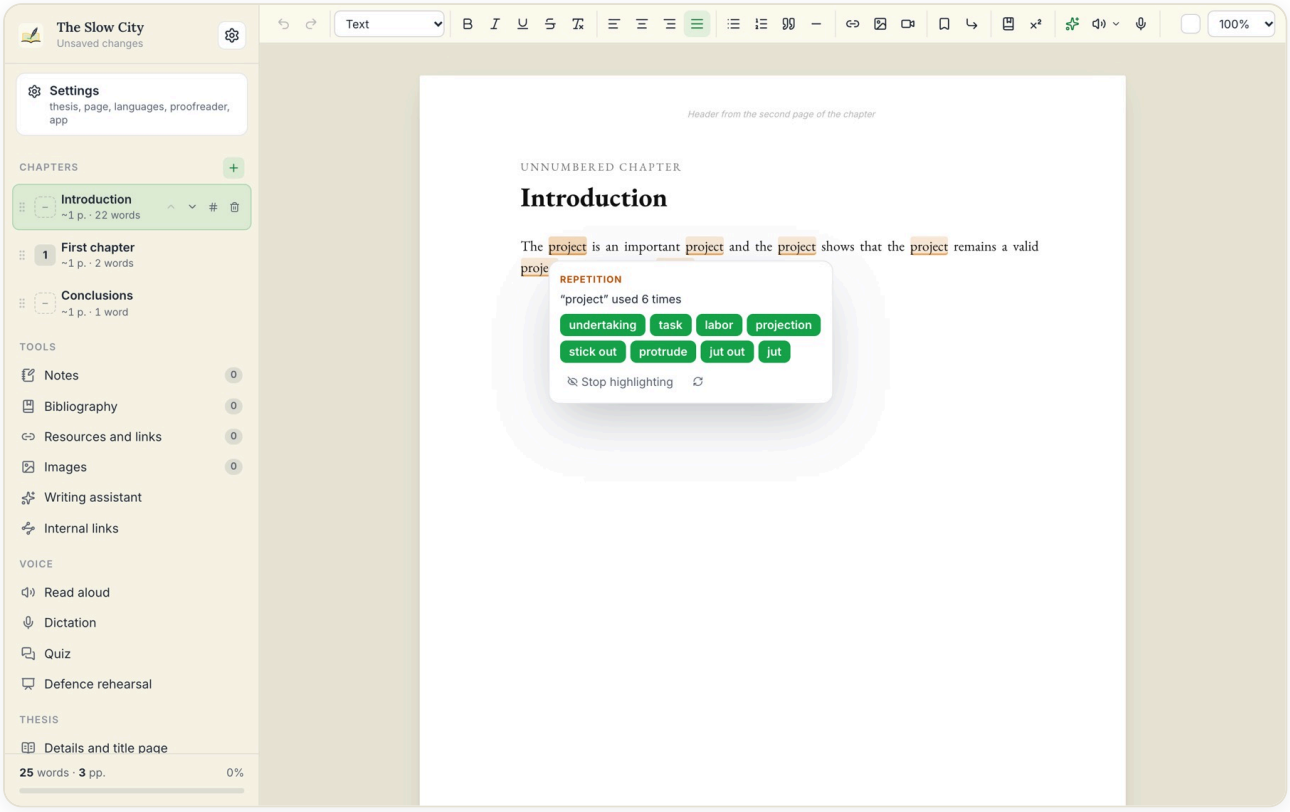
What changes:

- words in spelling dictionaries (even a plain list of your course's terms) **are no longer flagged** by LanguageTool;
- with a Hunspell dictionary the checker **also works offline**: choose **Custom dictionaries** as the checker, or keep LanguageTool and Gradus will use the dictionaries when the service does not respond or does not support the language. Unknown words are underlined in red with suggested corrections;
- **synonyms and antonyms** from thesauri appear first in the Assistant panel, with the dictionary name as source, even for inflected or plural words.



In the Assistant panel, synonyms from the custom thesaurus, with their source.

Repeated words and sentences



Repetitions highlighted in orange and alternatives in one click.

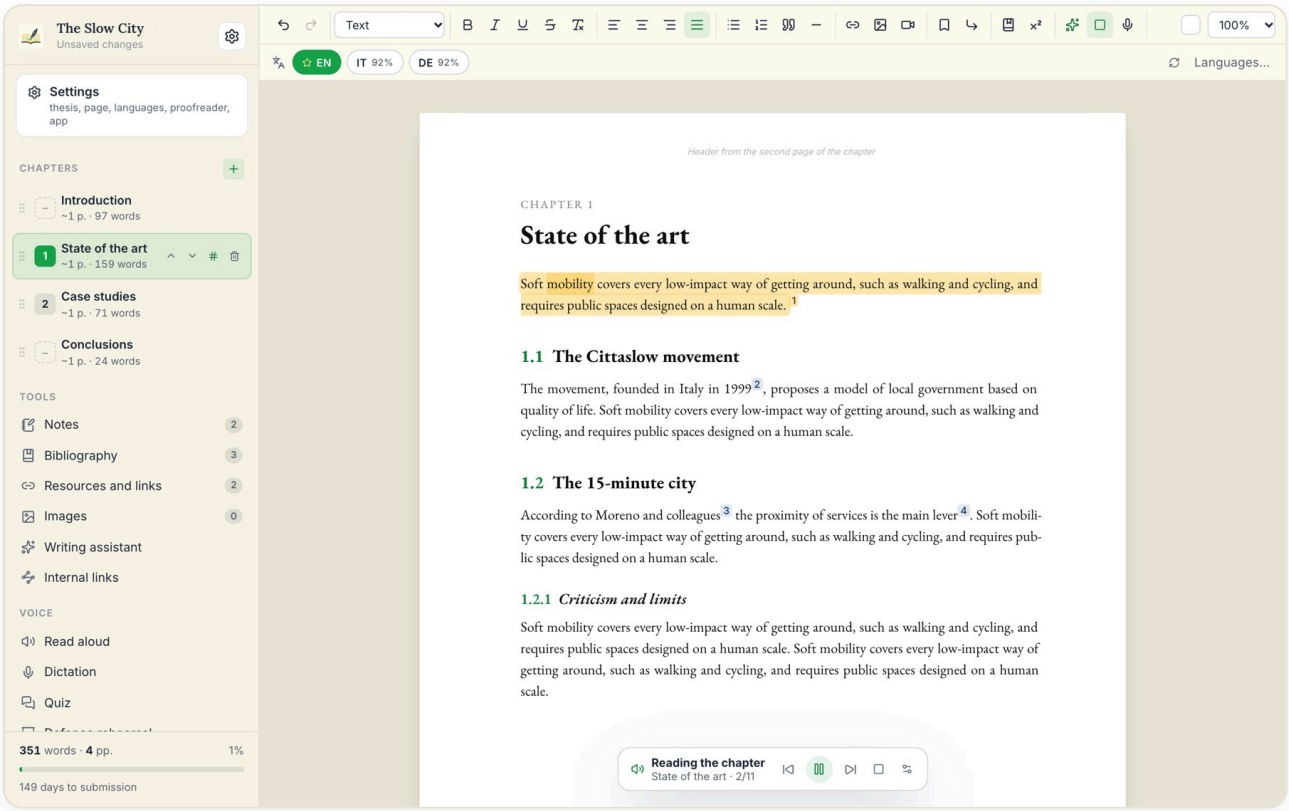
As you write, Gradus counts words and compares the chapter's sentences. **Words used too often or too close together** and **repeated or very similar sentences** are **highlighted in orange**. A click opens a box with **at least five alternatives** (synonyms from dictionaries, Wiktionary or AI; for sentences, rephrasings that keep the meaning): pick one and it replaces the text. The alternative you pick does not come back in later suggestions. "Stop highlighting" removes a word from the flags. Turn highlighting on or off in **Settings → Proofreader and assistant**.

09

Voice: reading, dictation, quiz and defence

Gradus can read your thesis aloud, type what you dictate, ask you random questions about what you have written and listen while you rehearse your defence, analysing your tone of voice and level of uncertainty. Everything works in the thesis languages; the commands are in the **Voice** section of the sidebar.

Reading aloud



The sentence being read is highlighted on the page; the reading controls are at the bottom.

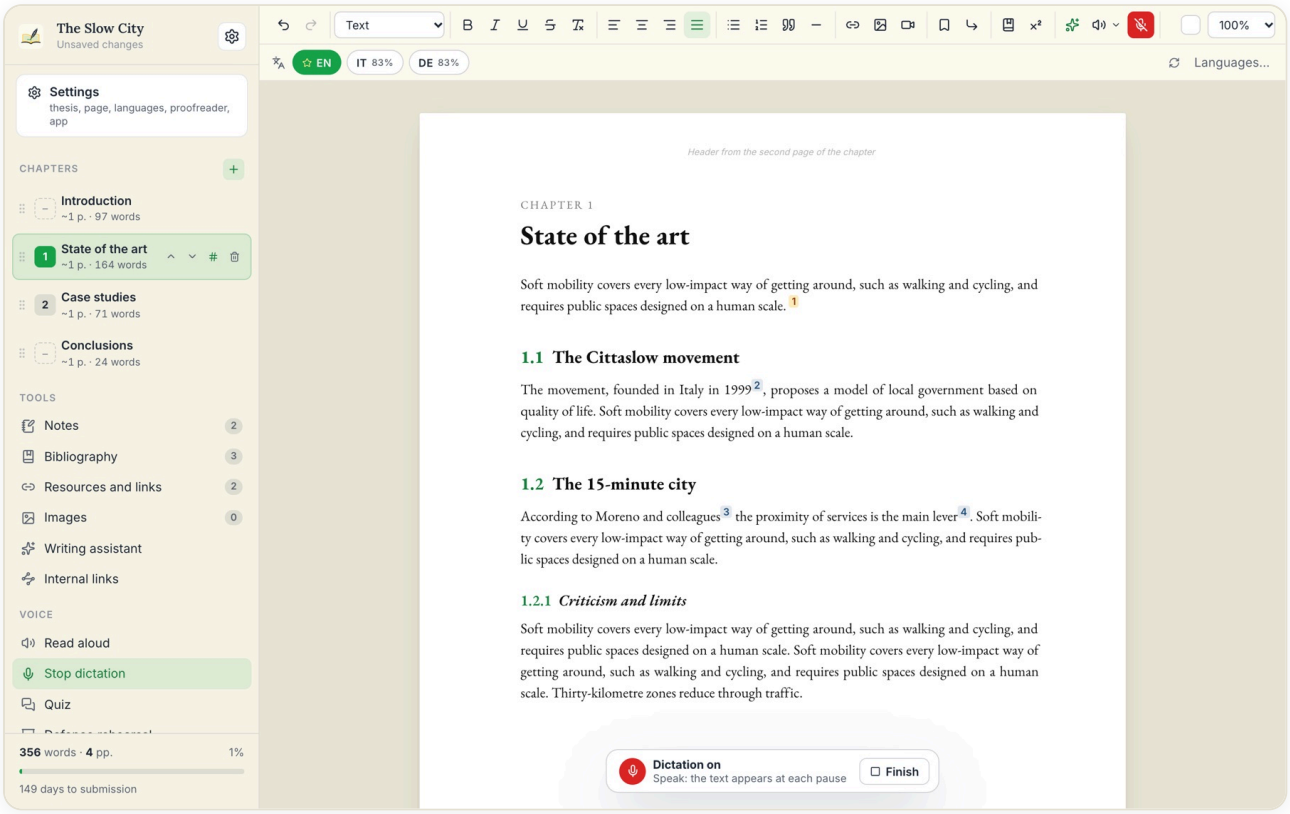
The **speaker** button in the formatting bar (or ⌘⇧L / Ctrl+Shift+L) reads:

- **the selected text**;
- **the open chapter**, starting with its title;
- **the whole thesis**, from the open chapter onwards, opening one chapter after another.

The sentence being read is highlighted in yellow and the page follows it. The bar at the bottom lets you pause, go back to the previous sentence, skip to the next or stop reading (also with Esc). Reading can also be started from the right-click menu.

Gradus reads in the language you are viewing: with a multilingual thesis you can listen to the translations too.

Dictation



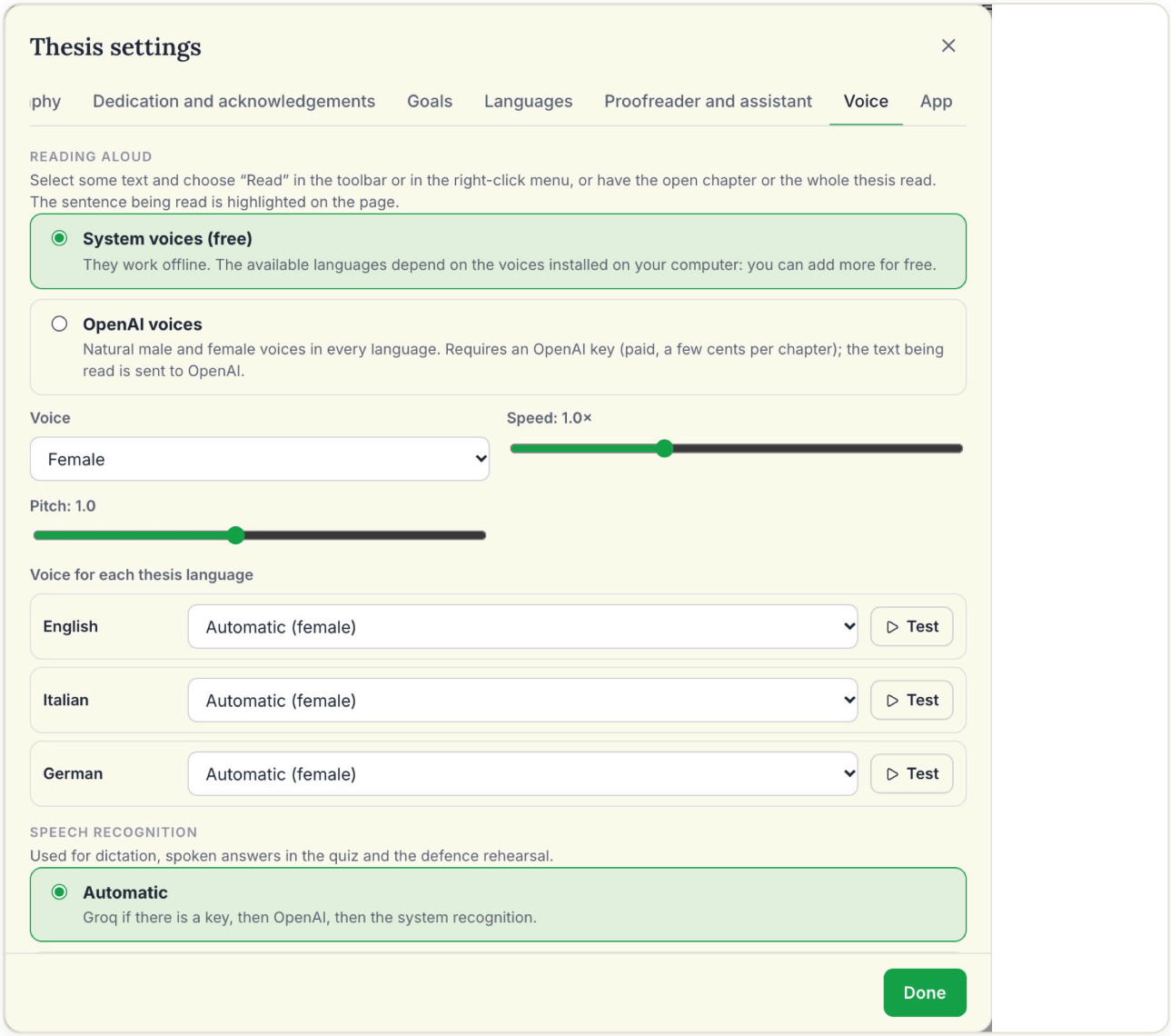
Dictation is on: the text appears where the cursor is.

Press the **microphone** button (or ⌘⇧D / Ctrl+Shift+D) and speak: the text is typed at the cursor, with the right spacing and capitals. Press **Finish** or the microphone again to stop.

- With **Whisper on Groq** (free with a key) the text appears at each pause, in almost 100 languages, already punctuated. Say “new paragraph” at the end of a sentence to start a new line.
- With **system recognition** (no key, where available) the text appears as you speak; punctuation is dictated aloud: “comma”, “full stop”, “question mark”, “new paragraph”.

The first time, the system asks for permission to use the microphone.

Voice settings



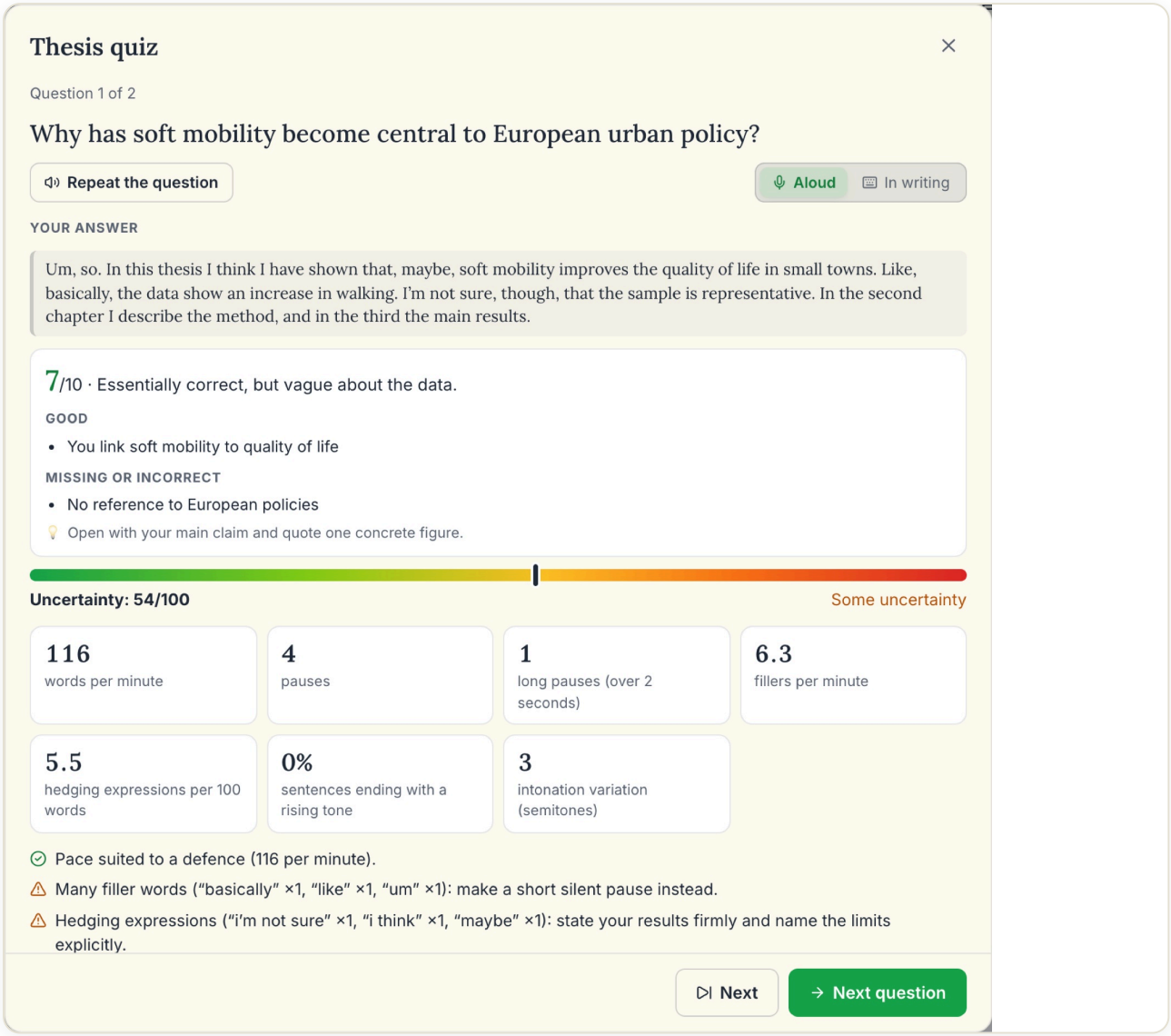
Settings → Voice.

In **Settings → Voice** choose:

- **the reading engine**: **system voices**, free and offline (languages depend on the installed voices; on a Mac add more in System Settings → Accessibility → Spoken Content), or **OpenAI voices**, natural in every language, with a paid key;
- **the voice**: female or male, then the exact voice for each thesis language, with the **Test** button; **speed** and **pitch**;
- **speech recognition** for dictation, quiz and defence: automatic, **Whisper on Groq** (recommended, free: get the key at console.groq.com), OpenAI or the system. On Linux, and often on Windows, there is no system recognition: you need Groq.

Test the microphone records four seconds and, if there is a key, shows what it understood.

Quiz

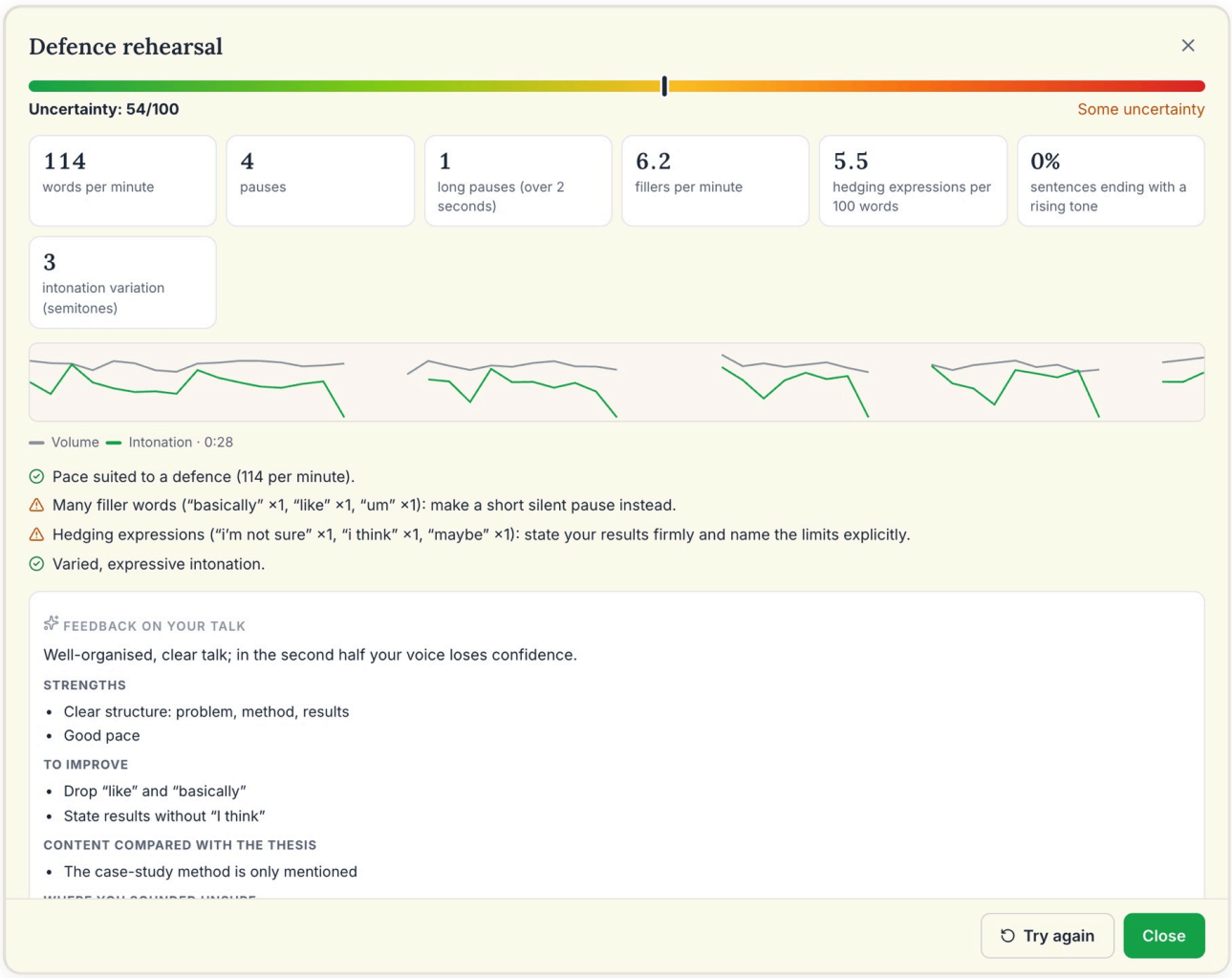


A question, the spoken answer, the grade and the uncertainty index.

Voice → Quiz asks you random questions about what you have written so far, as in the exam. Choose the whole thesis or the open chapter, how many questions and, with AI, the difficulty (easy, as at the defence, strict committee). Questions are read aloud.

- Answer **aloud** (**Answer**, then **I've finished answering**) or **in writing**.
- With an AI service you get a **grade out of 10**, what is right, what is missing and a tip; at the end, the average.
- Without AI, questions are built from the text with fixed templates and you can compare your answer with the passage of the thesis.
- Spoken answers also show pace, fillers and the uncertainty index.

Defence rehearsal



The result: uncertainty index, voice measures, tips and feedback on the content.

Voice → Defence rehearsal: choose the maximum length (3 to 20 minutes), press **Start speaking** and present your thesis as you would to the committee. At the end Gradus shows:

- the **uncertainty index** from 0 to 100 (confident, fairly confident, some uncertainty, very uncertain);
- **words per minute**, **pauses** and long pauses, **filler words** (“um”, “like”, “basically”…) and **hedging expressions** (“maybe”, “I think”, “I’m not sure”…);
- **intonation**: how much it varies, how many sentences end with a rising tone like questions, and whether your voice drops at the end of sentences, with a chart of volume and intonation;
- **tips** to improve and, with AI, **feedback on the content** compared with the thesis, including the points where you sounded unsure;
- the **transcript** of your talk.

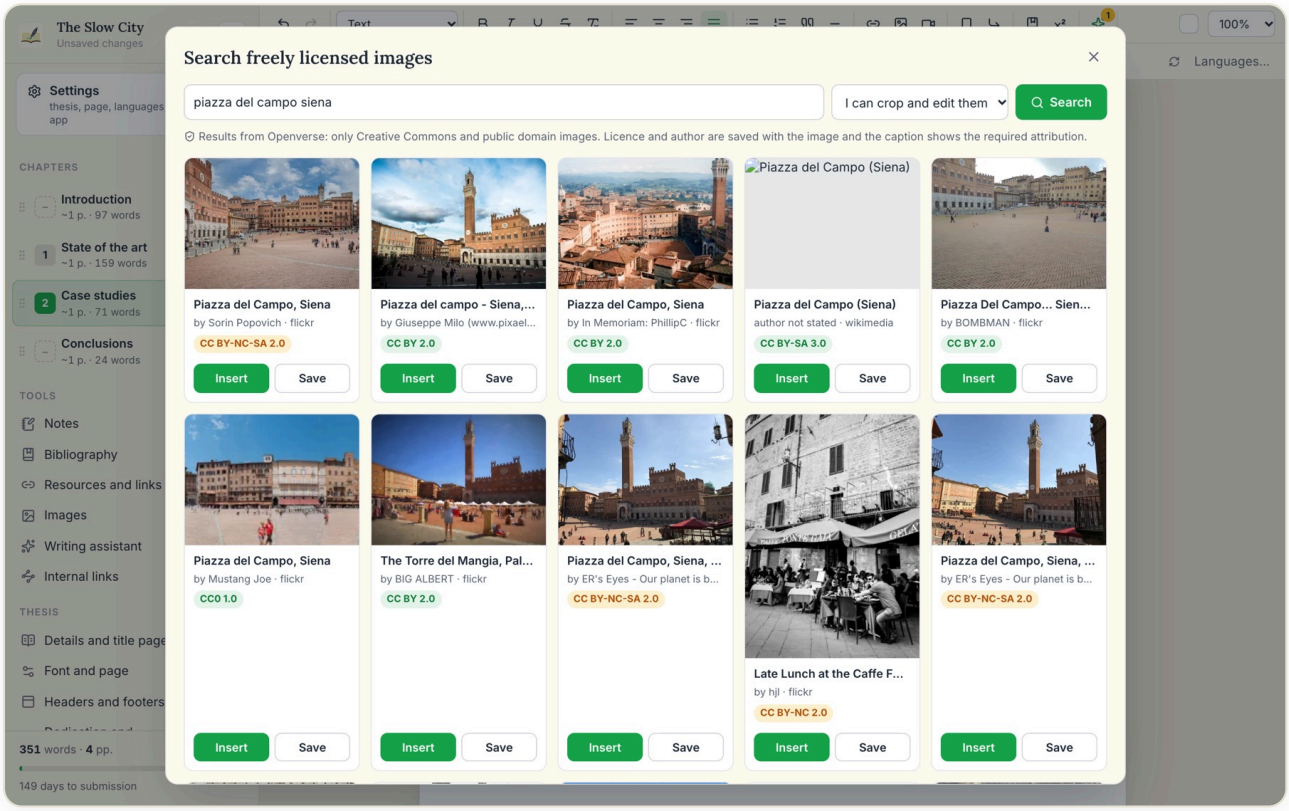
The index is an estimate based on sound and words, useful for tracking progress from one rehearsal to the next. Pace, pauses and intonation are measured on your computer; the words need speech recognition.

10

Images and licences

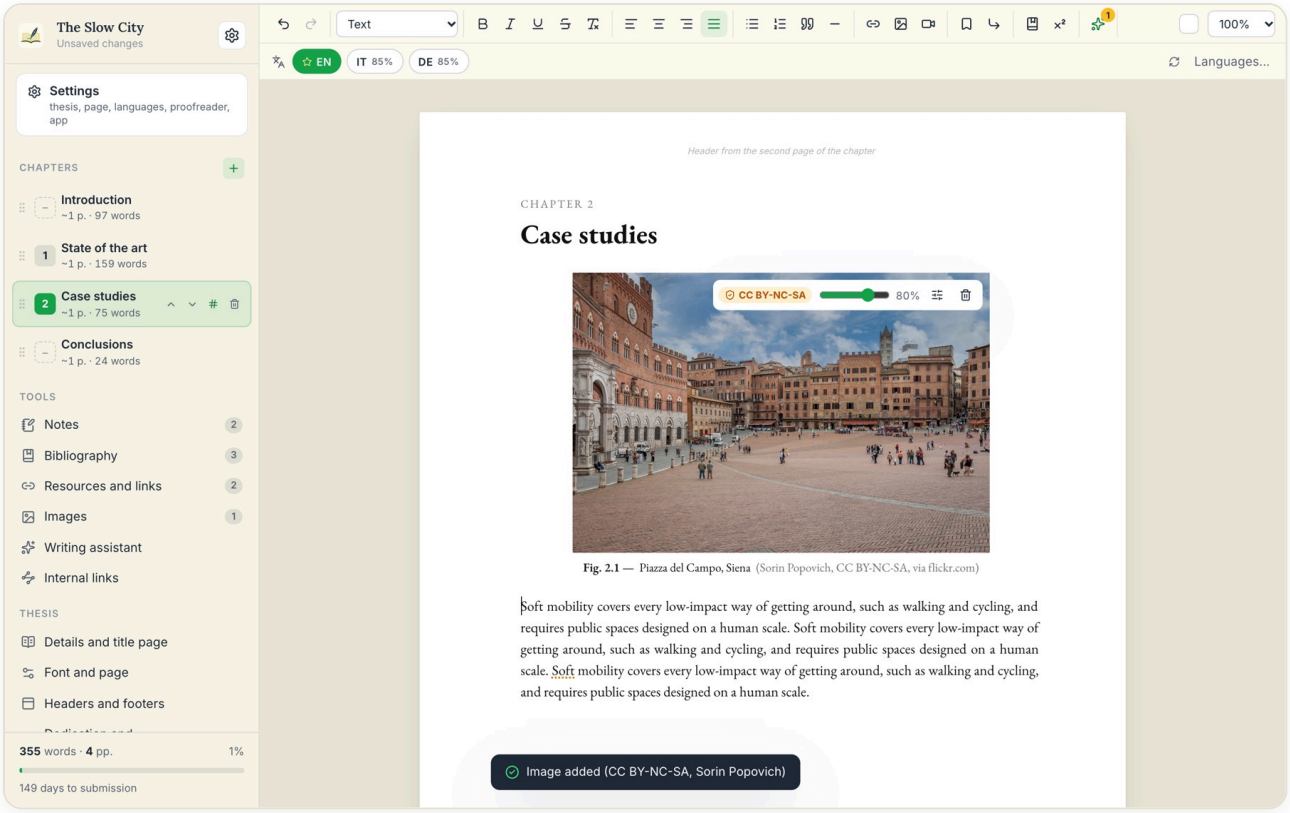
Every image in the thesis lives in the **image manager** together with its licence, author and source. In the text it appears as a numbered figure (“Fig. 2.1”) with caption and attribution.

Searching for free images



Searching Openverse: Creative Commons and public domain images only.

From **Images → Search free images** you can search millions of images from Wikimedia Commons, Flickr and museum archives. First choose the intended use: *I can crop and edit them*, *Commercial use too* or *All free licences*. **Insert** puts the image in the text, **Save** keeps it in the manager. The licence is verified at the source and the caption shows author, licence and website of origin.



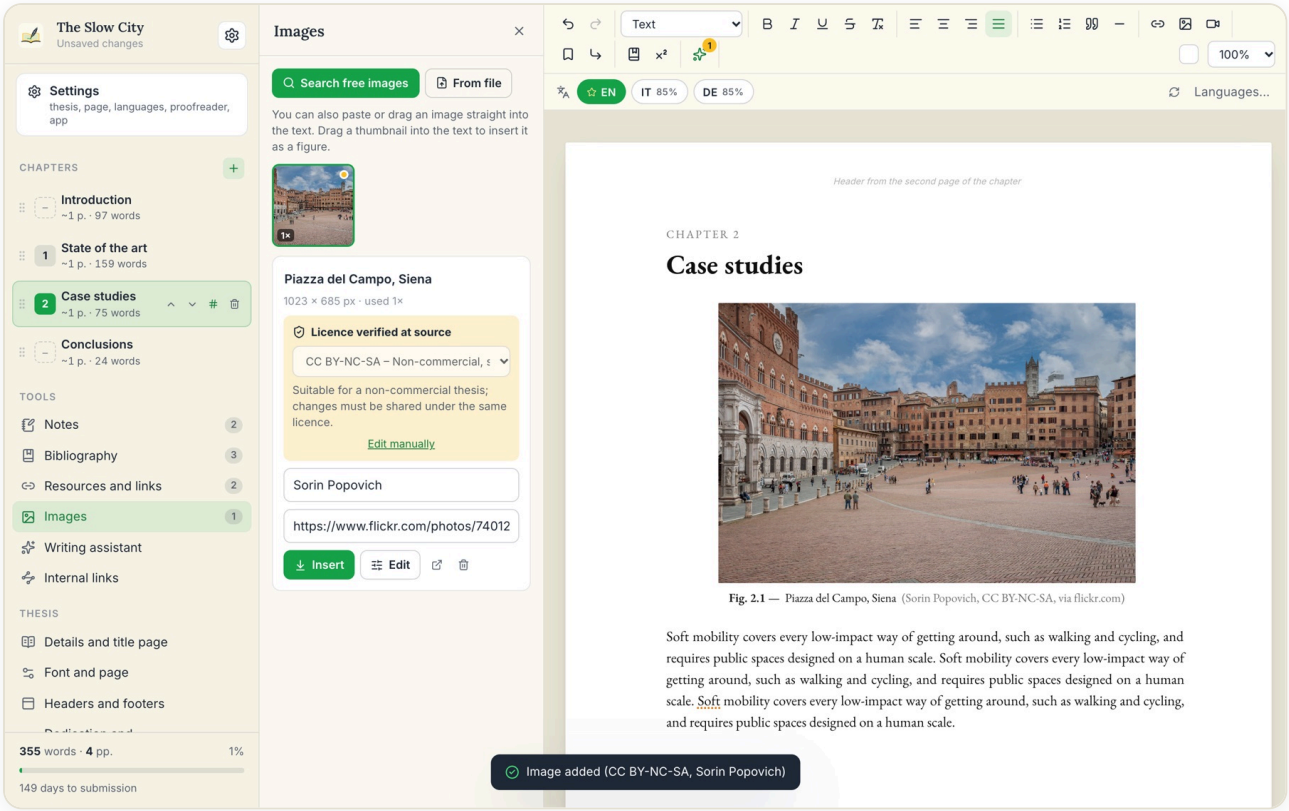
A figure in the text: automatic number, editable caption, attribution and licence.

Licences

LICENCE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR THESIS
🟢 **Your own work, CC0, public domain**	Free use.
🟢 **CC BY, CC BY-SA**	Free, with attribution (already in the caption). With SA, changes must be shared under the same licence.
🟡 **CC BY-NC, BY-NC-SA**	Suitable for a thesis; not for a commercial publication.
🟡 **CC BY-ND, BY-NC-ND**	You can use them but not edit them: no crops or filters.
🔴 **Unknown**	To check. In a thesis it is allowed only as a quotation for criticism or discussion, with author and source.

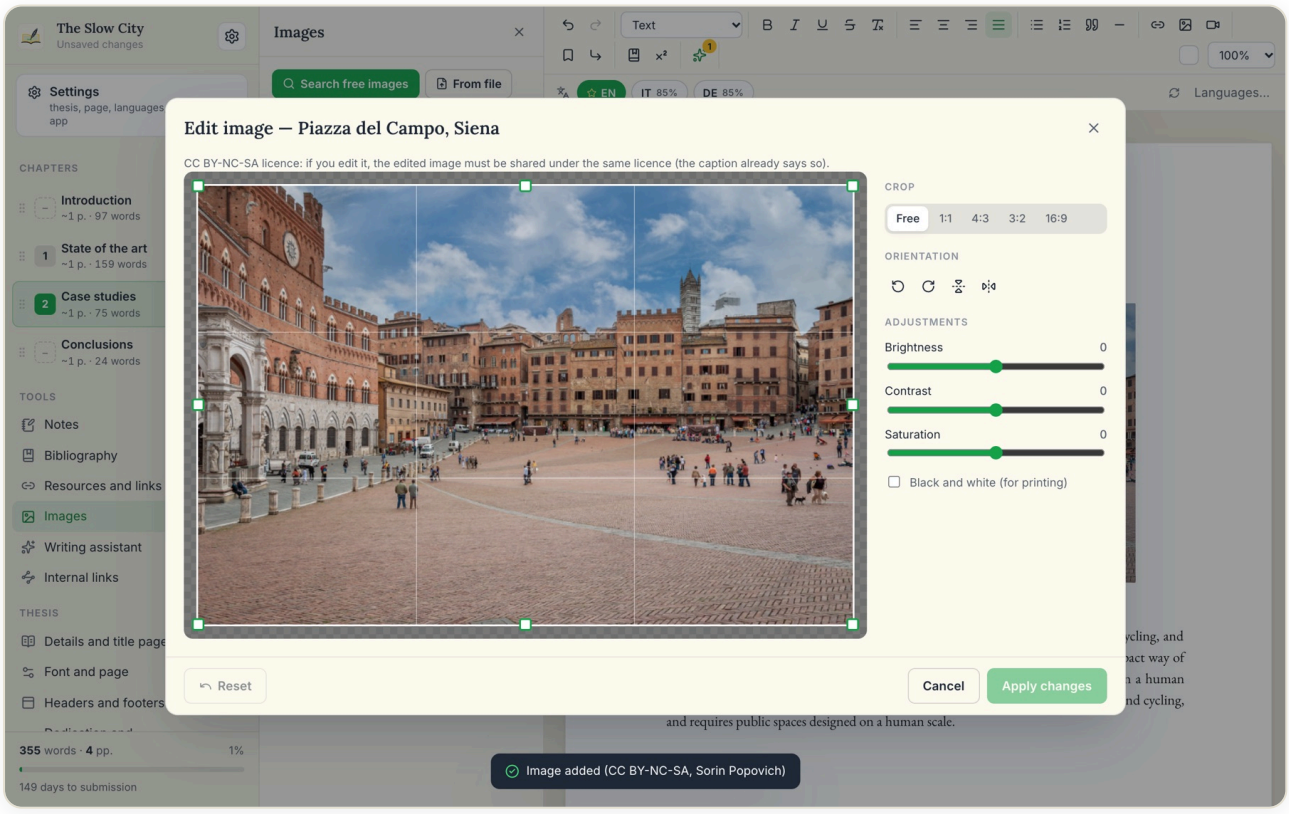
Your own images

With **From file**, or by pasting or dragging an image into the text, the image enters the manager with the licence “to check”. Gradus reads author and copyright from the photo’s metadata, if present. Set the licence in the manager: for your own photos and charts choose **My own work**.



The image manager: the coloured dot shows the licence status.

Editing an image



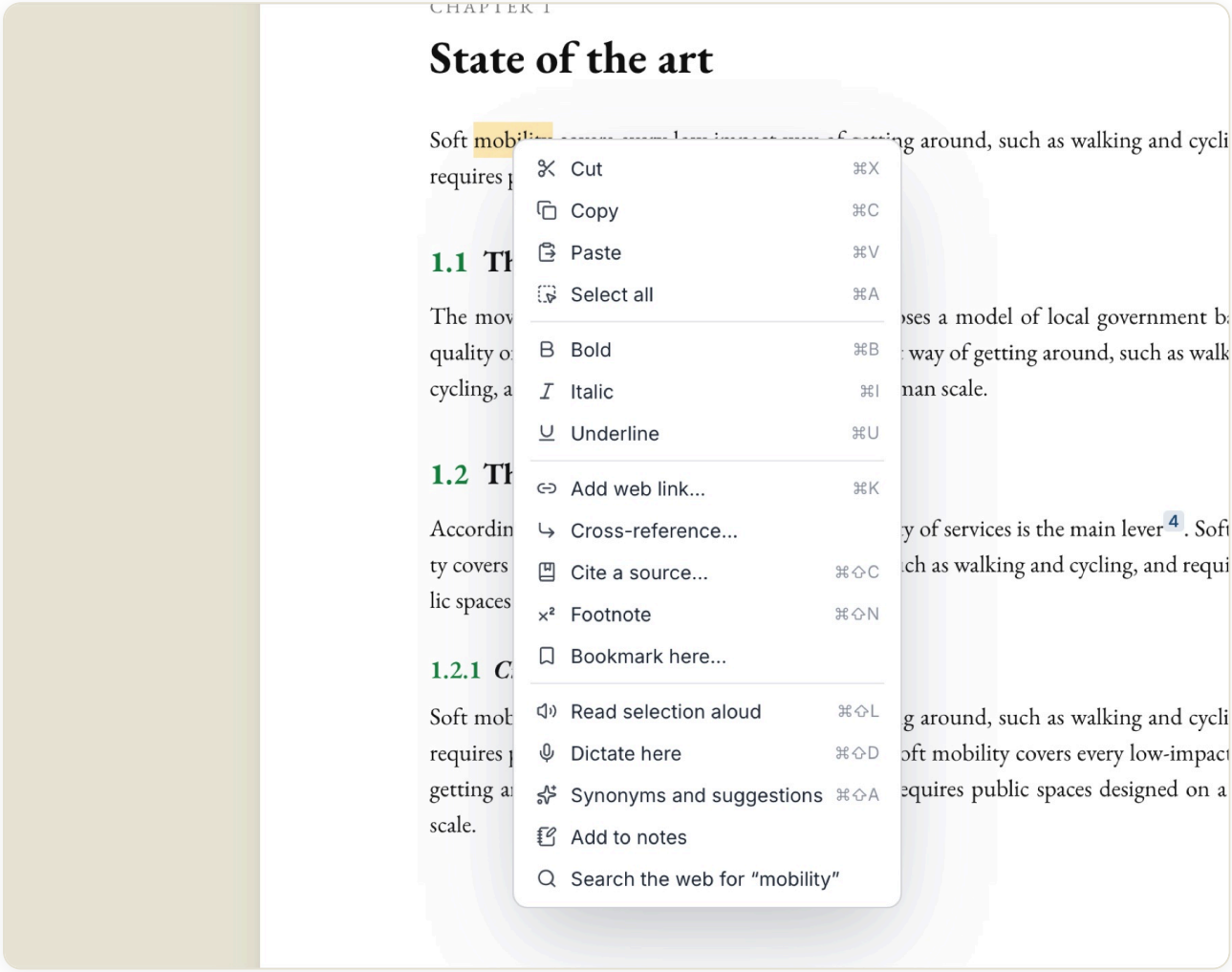
The image editor.

From the manager or from the figure in the text, open **Edit**: you can crop (free, 1:1, 4:3, 3:2, 16:9), rotate, flip and adjust brightness, contrast and saturation, or convert to black and white for printing. Changes apply to every figure that uses that image. Gradus warns you when the licence does not allow changes.

11

Links, videos, bookmarks and cross-references

The right-click menu



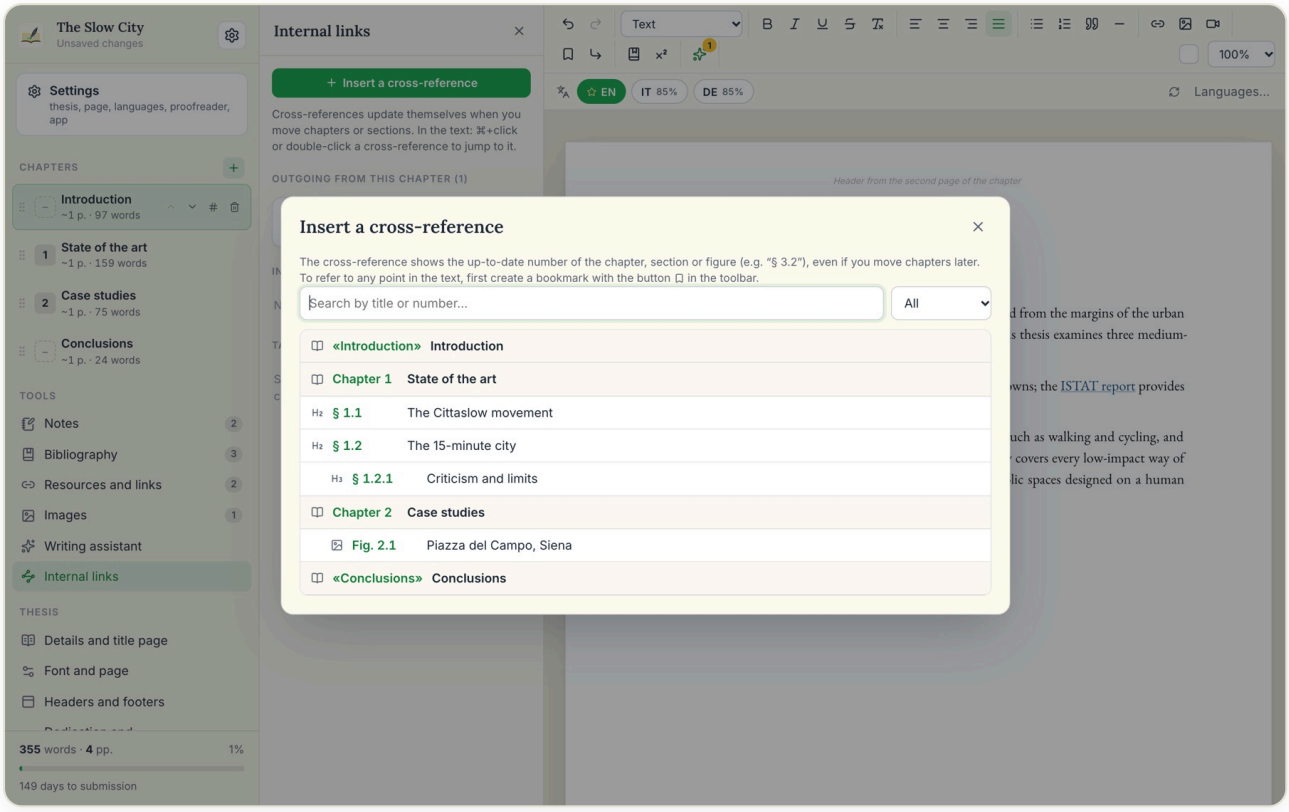
The right-click menu, in the app’s language.

Right-clicking the text opens a menu in the interface language with cut, copy, paste, bold, italic, underline, **Add web link…** (on a link: open, edit, remove), cross-reference, cite a source, footnote, bookmark, **Read aloud**, **Dictate here**, synonyms, add to notes and web search. Hold `Shift` to open the system menu instead.

External links and videos

Select the text and press the link button (or `⌘K` / `Ctrl+K`) to link it to a web address; you can also choose from your saved resources. The video button inserts a YouTube video, which stays playable in the web version and becomes a link in the PDF. Videos from other websites are inserted as links.

Cross-references



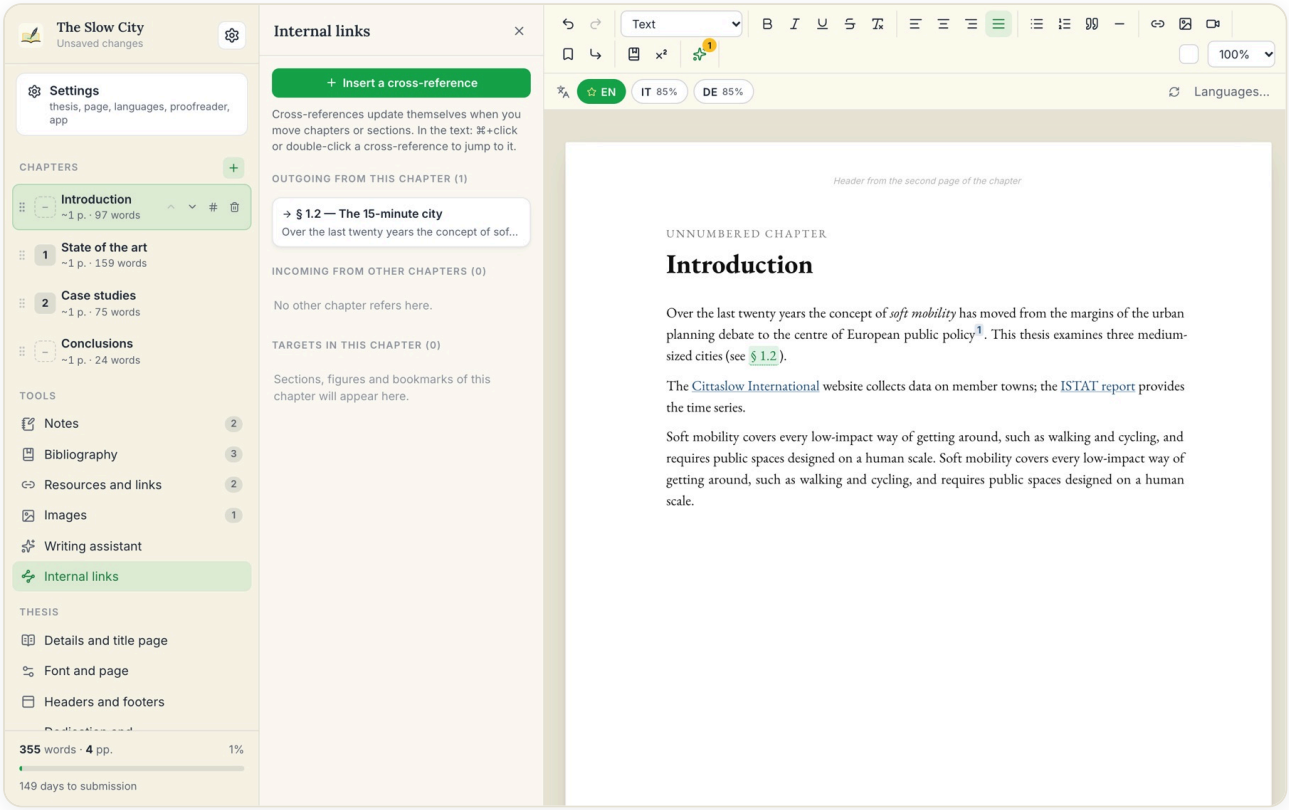
Choosing the target of a cross-reference.

A cross-reference links a point in the thesis to a chapter, section, figure or bookmark. In the text it appears as "Chapter 2", "§ 2.1" or "Fig. 3.2" and **updates itself** when you move chapters. In the PDF it also shows the page ("§ 2.1, p. 14"); in Word and on the web it is a clickable link.

To refer to any point in the text, first insert a **bookmark** with its button and give it a name.

In the text, ⌘/Ctrl+click or double-click on a cross-reference takes you to its target.

The Internal links panel

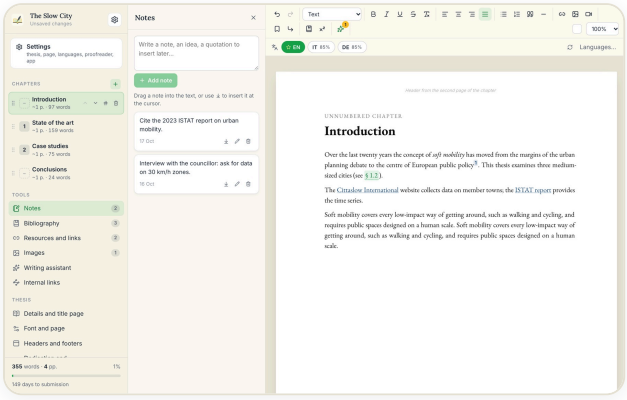


Outgoing and incoming cross-references and targets of the open chapter.

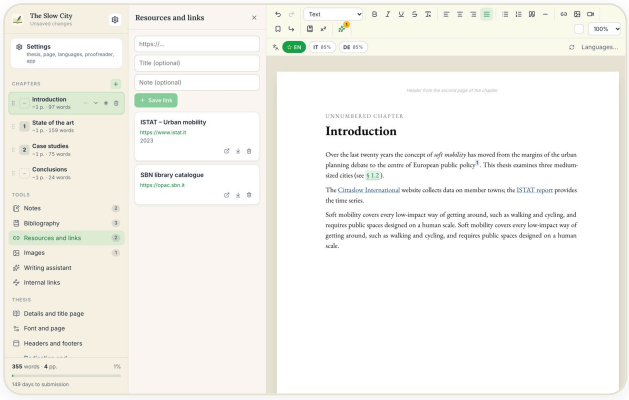
For the open chapter, the panel shows cross-references to other parts of the thesis, those coming from other chapters and the points you can refer to. Cross-references to deleted content are flagged in red.

12

Notes and resources



Notes.



Resources and links.

Notes

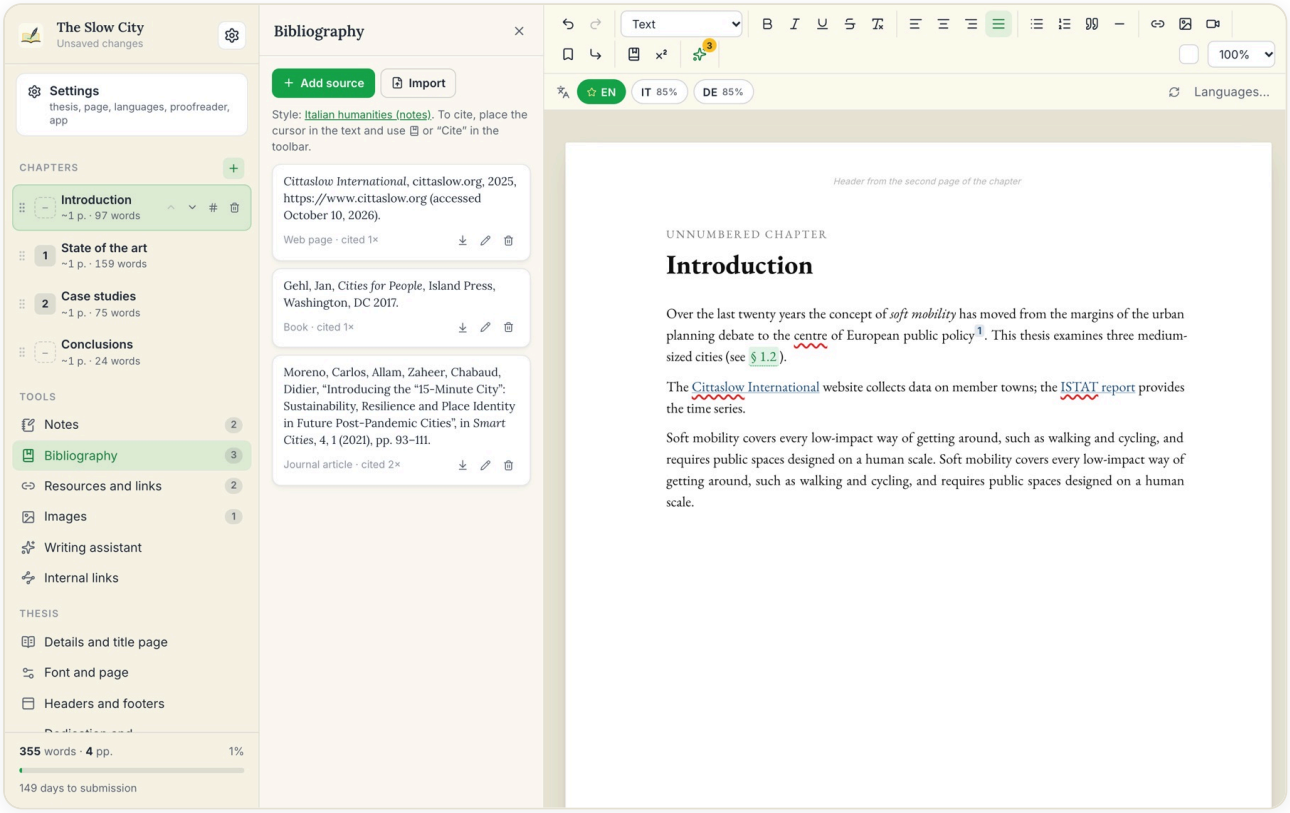
Write down ideas, quotations to find and reminders. When the time comes, **drag** the note into the text or use the insert button: it becomes a paragraph and the note is marked as inserted (you can see it again with “Also show those already inserted”).

Resources and links

Save the websites, catalogues and documents you consult often, with a title and a note. You can open them in the browser, search them and insert them into the text as links, including by dragging.

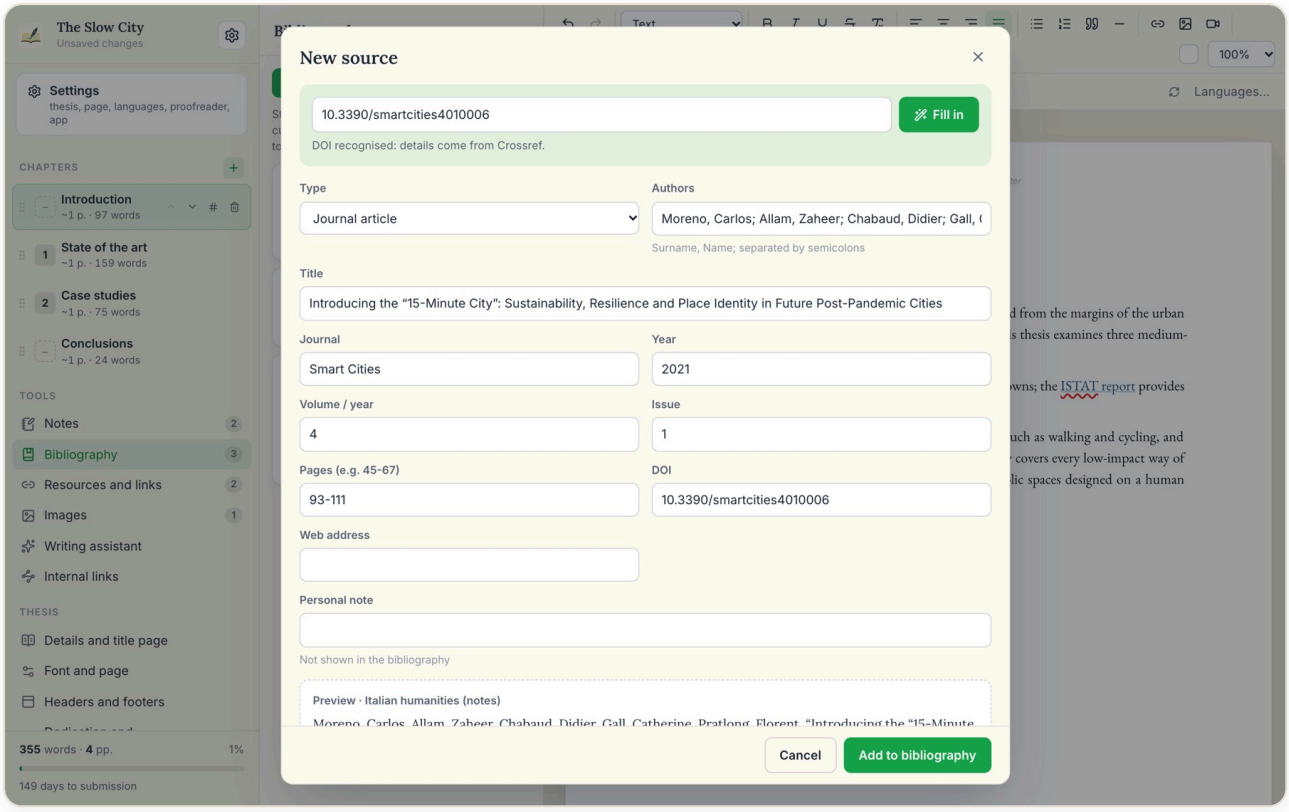
13

Bibliography and citations



The Bibliography panel, with sources formatted in the chosen style.

Adding a source



A DOI is enough: the details come from Crossref.

Open **Bibliography → Add source** and paste into the green box:

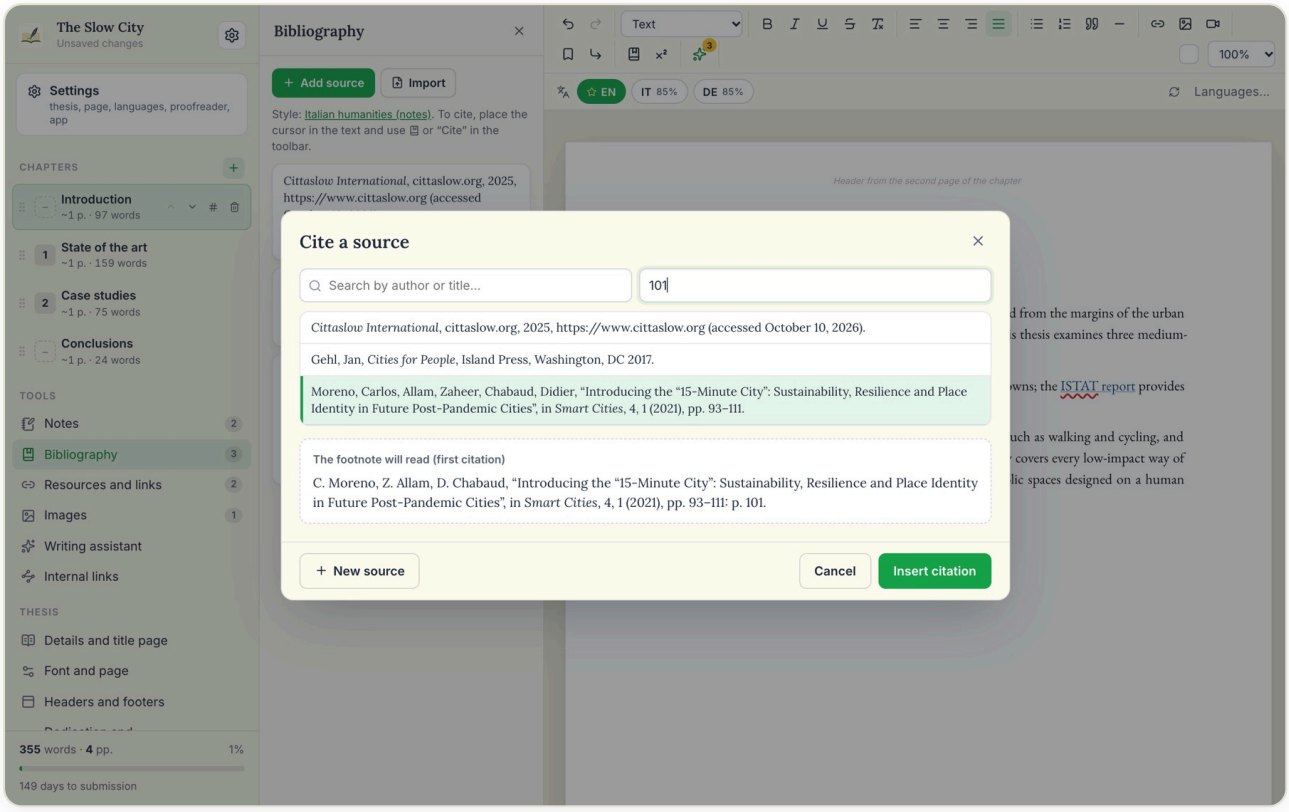
- a **DOI** (e.g. `10.3390/smartcities4010006`) for articles and chapters: details come from Crossref;
- an **ISBN** for books: details come from Open Library;
- the **address** of a web page: Gradus reads title, author, date and, for academic websites, the DOI.

Fill in completes the fields; check them and correct them if needed. You can also fill everything in by hand by choosing the type: book, article, chapter, thesis, web page, report. Write authors as *Surname, Name* separated by semicolons. At the bottom you see a preview in the chosen style.

Importing from Zotero, Mendeley, JabRef

Import loads a **BibTeX** (`.bib`) or **CSL-JSON** file. In Zotero: right-click the collection → *Export Collection* → BibTeX or CSL JSON format. Sources already present (same DOI, ISBN or title and year) are skipped.

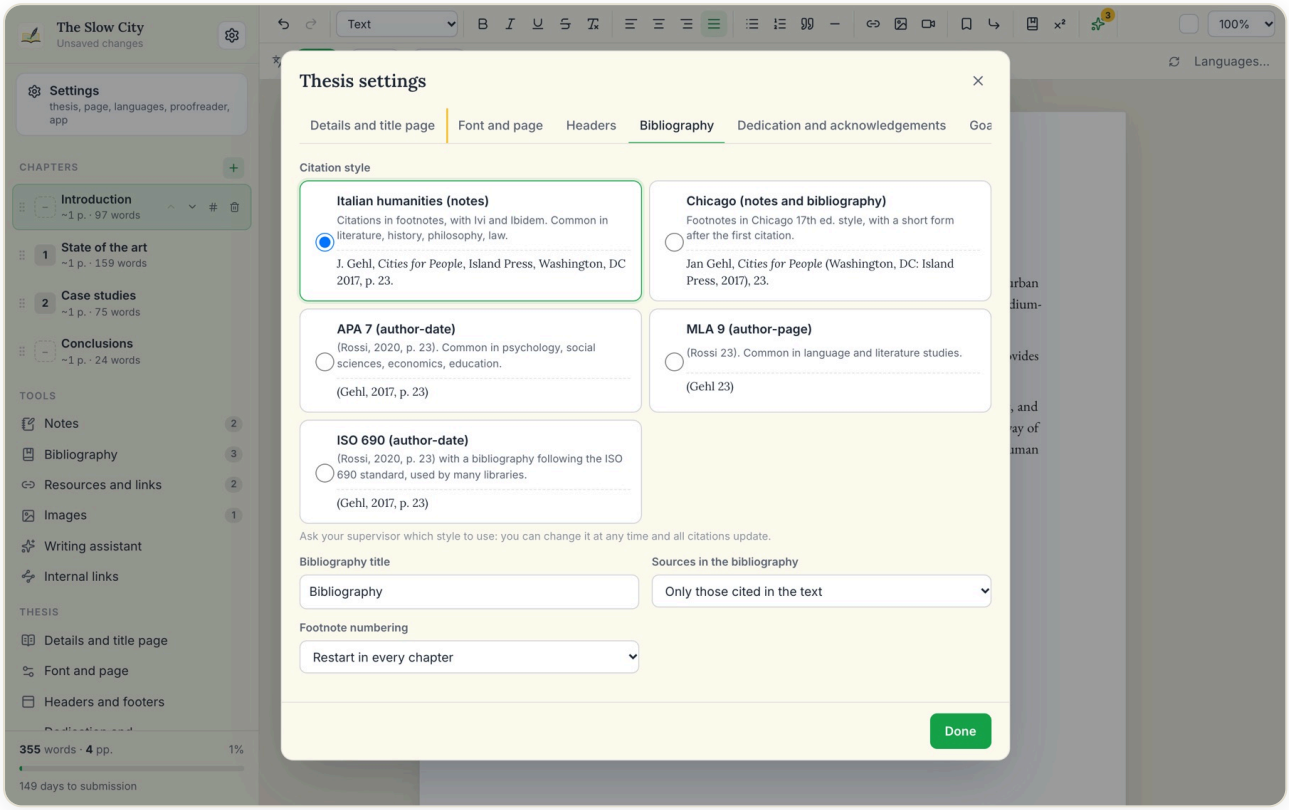
Citing



The Cite window: source, page and preview.

Place the cursor and press **Cite** (`⌘⇧C` / `Ctrl+Shift+C`). Choose the source, enter the page ("23" or "23-25": Gradus writes "p." or "pp." itself) and confirm. Double-clicking a citation in the text reopens it to change source or page.

Citation styles



Settings → Bibliography: each style shows an example with your sources.

STYLE	IN THE TEXT	SUITABLE FOR
Italian humanities	note: *J. Gehl, Cities for People, Island Press, 2010, p. 23.*	literature, history, philosophy, law
Chicago (notes)	note: *Jan Gehl, Cities for People (Island Press, 2010), 23.*	humanities, art history
APA 7	(Gehl, 2010, p. 23)	psychology, social sciences, economics
MLA 9	(Gehl 23)	languages and literature
ISO 690	(Gehl, 2010, p. 23)	many libraries and programmes

You can change style at any time: citations, notes and bibliography update immediately. Ask your supervisor which style to use. Labels such as “p.”, “ed.” and “accessed” follow the language of the thesis.

Ibid. and short form

In note styles Gradus applies the conventions automatically:

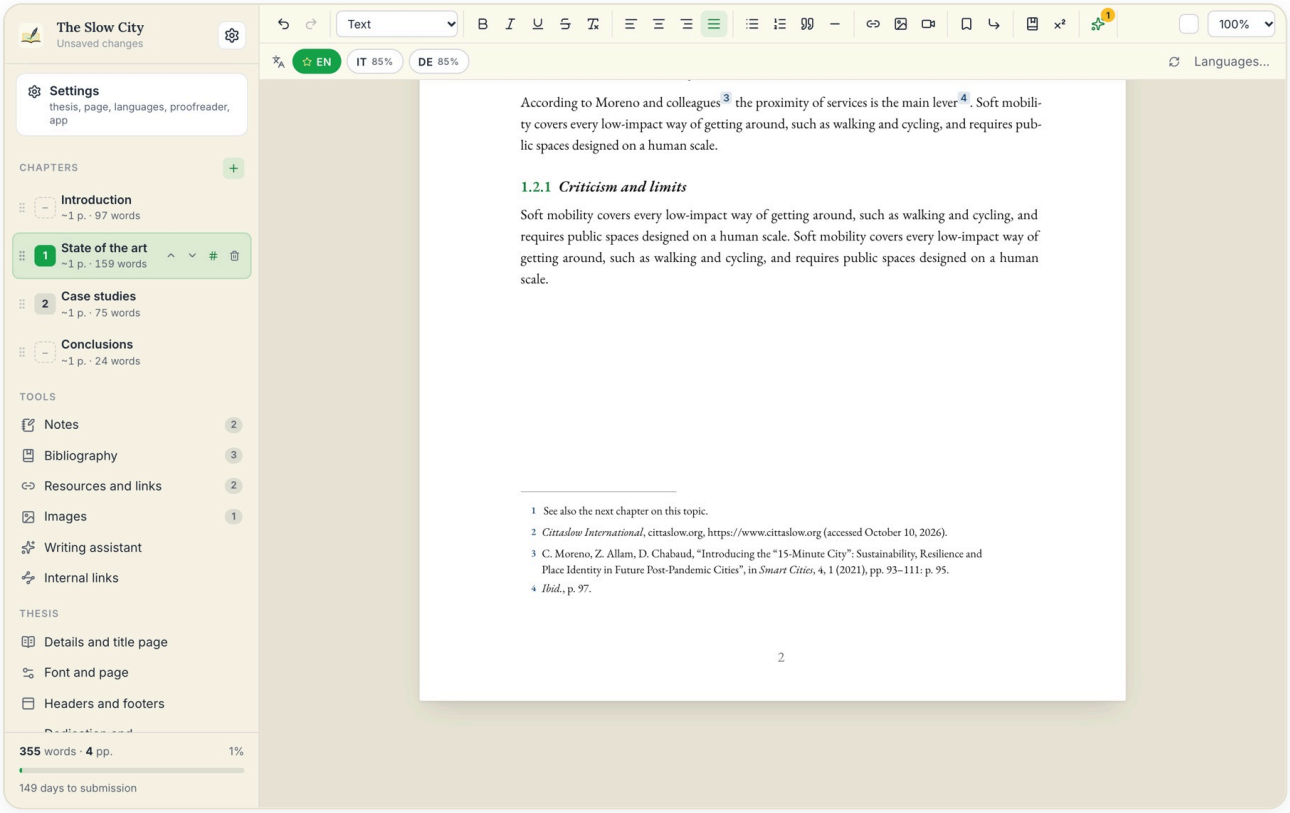
- the **first citation** of a source uses the full form;
- if the previous note cites the **same source and page**: *Ibid.*;
- if it cites the **same source with a different page**: *Ibid.*, p. 30 (in Italian *Ivi*);
- when you return to a source already cited: the **short form** (author, short title, page).

The final bibliography

On export Gradus adds the bibliography at the end of the thesis, sorted by author and included in the table of contents. In **Settings → Bibliography** you can change its title (Bibliography, References…) and choose whether to include only the cited sources or all those you added.

14

Footnotes



The chapter notes at the bottom of the page: you write and edit them here.

Press **Note** (⌘⇧N / Ctrl+Shift+N): the number appears in the text and the cursor moves to the note text at the bottom of the page. There you find all the chapter notes, both those you wrote and citations in notes, in the right order.

- a click on the note number takes you to the reference in the text, and vice versa;
- the bin next to the note deletes it together with the reference;
- numbering restarts in every chapter or runs through the whole thesis (**Settings → Bibliography**).

In the PDF notes really sit at the foot of the page, under a rule; in Word they become Word footnotes; in the web version they are collected at the end of each chapter, with links back and forth. In a secondary language you see and edit the translated notes.

15

Field research: questionnaires and transcripts

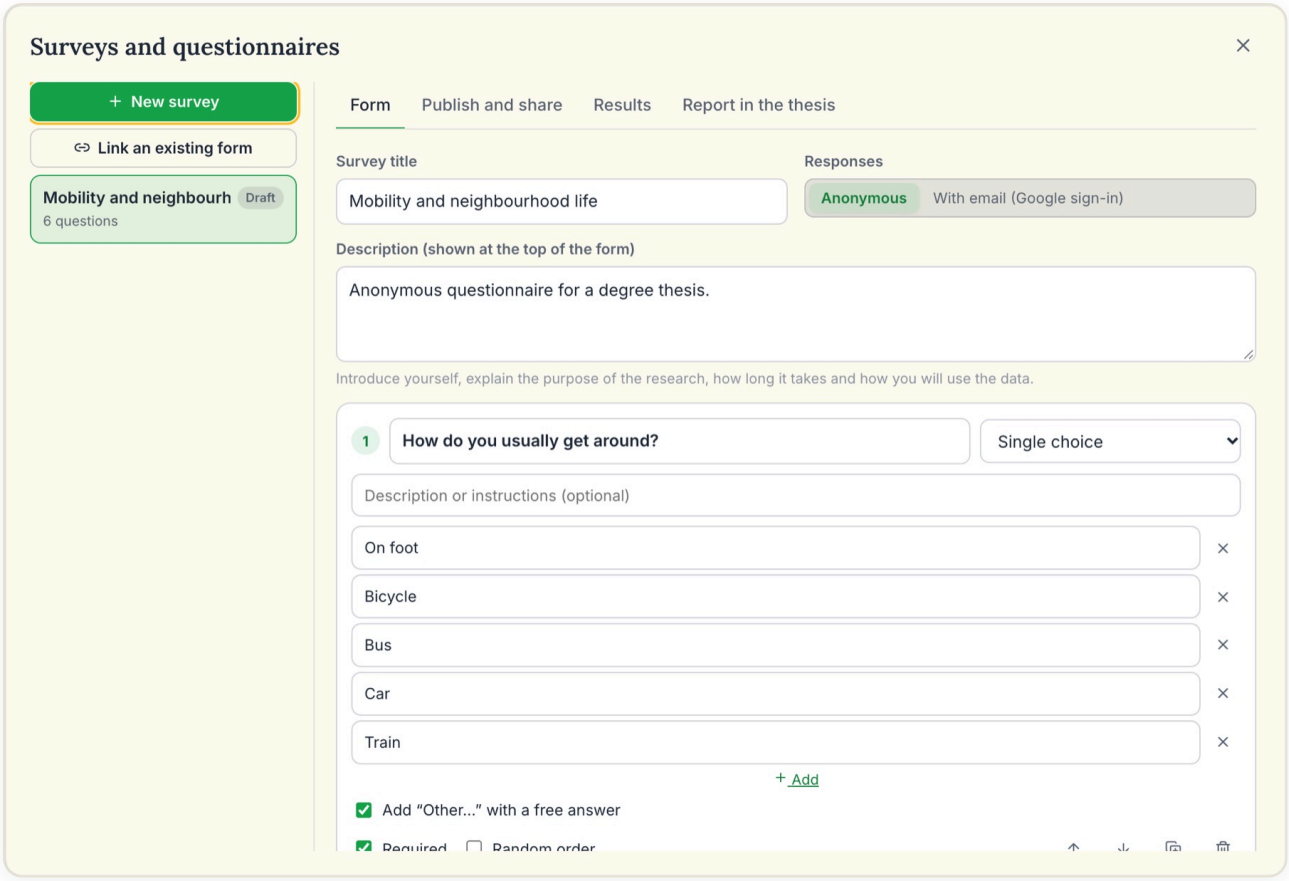
If your thesis includes a survey or interviews, Gradus helps you collect the data and bring it into the text. Questionnaires are made with **Google Forms**, and the results become a table and a self-updating report with charts; audio recordings become **transcripts** you can quote and, if you like, attach as appendices. The commands are in the **Field research** section of the sidebar.

Connecting your Google account

Questionnaires are created in **your Google account**: forms and responses stay there and come straight into the app, without passing through any Gradus server. The connection is stored only on this computer, never in the thesis file, and **Disconnect** removes it.

Go to **Settings → App → Google account** and press **Connect Google account**: the browser opens, sign in with your account and allow Gradus to create forms and read their responses. Until Google has finished verifying Gradus you will see the warning “Google hasn’t verified this app”: choose **Advanced** and then **Go to Gradus**. If you prefer to use a client ID you created in the Google Cloud Console, turn on **Use my own OAuth client ID** and follow the instructions below the fields.

Creating a questionnaire



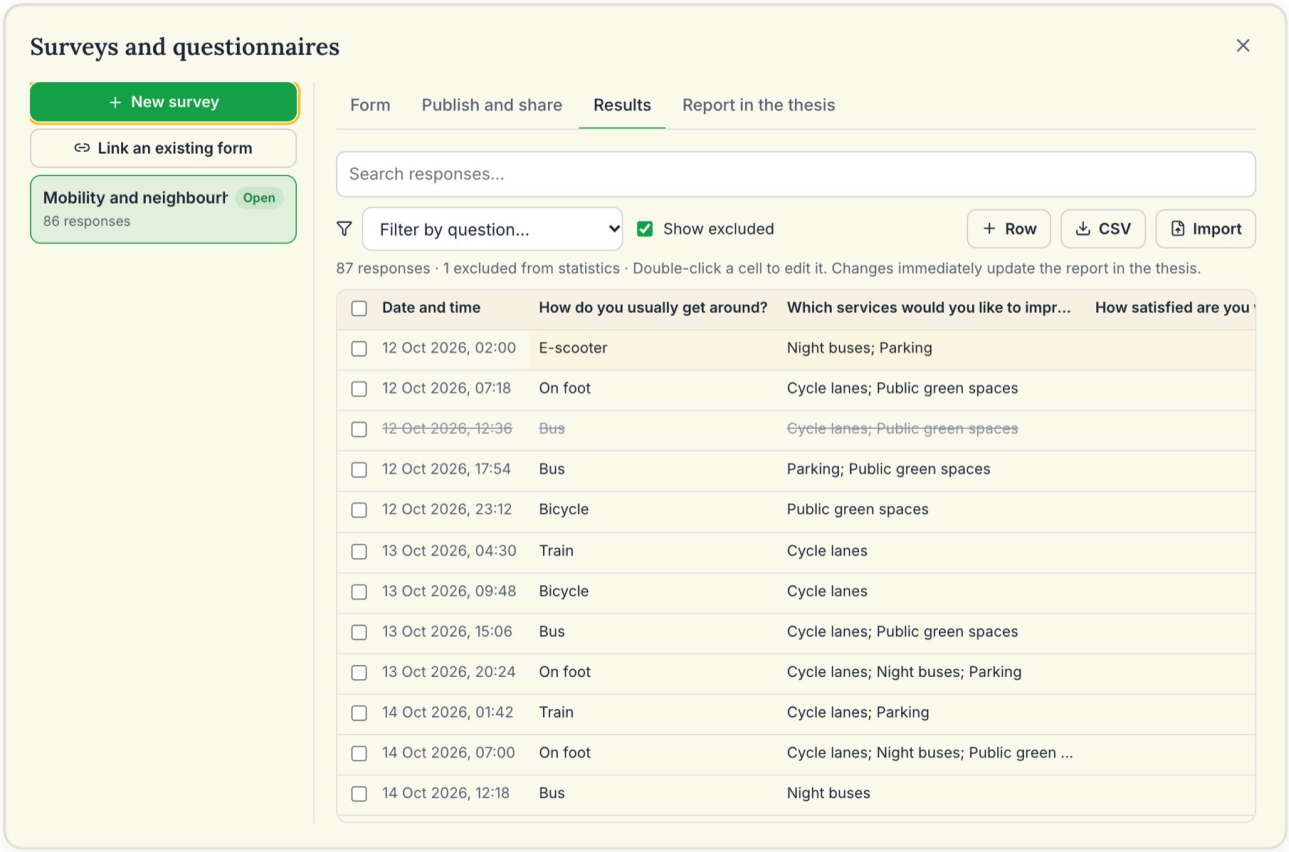
The form is designed in Gradus: questions, answer types and options.

Open **Field research → Surveys and questionnaires** and press **New survey**. In the **Form** tab write the title and description and add your questions. Every Google Forms type is available: **single choice**, **checkboxes** (multiple answers), **drop-down**, **short answer**, **paragraph**, **linear scale**, **star rating**, single- or multiple-choice **grids**, **date**, **time** and **sections**. Each question can be **required**, have its options in **random order** or an **"Other..."** option. Choose whether responses are **anonymous** or **with email** (respondents sign in with Google) and whether the survey has a **deadline**. Already have a form on Google? With **Link an existing form** you paste its link and Gradus reads its questions and responses.

Publishing and sharing

In the **Publish and share** tab press **Publish on Google Forms**: Gradus creates the form in your account and gives you the **link** to send by e-mail, chat or social media and the **QR code** to print or project. **Close now and download results** closes the form whenever you want; **Reopen the form** puts it back online. If you set a **deadline**, Gradus closes the form on Google as soon as you open the thesis after that date (and then checks every 5 minutes) and downloads the results: Google does not do this on its own, so responses that arrive after the deadline are excluded from the statistics, though you can readmit them. After publishing, questions are changed in Google Forms; the changes reach Gradus with **Download responses now**.

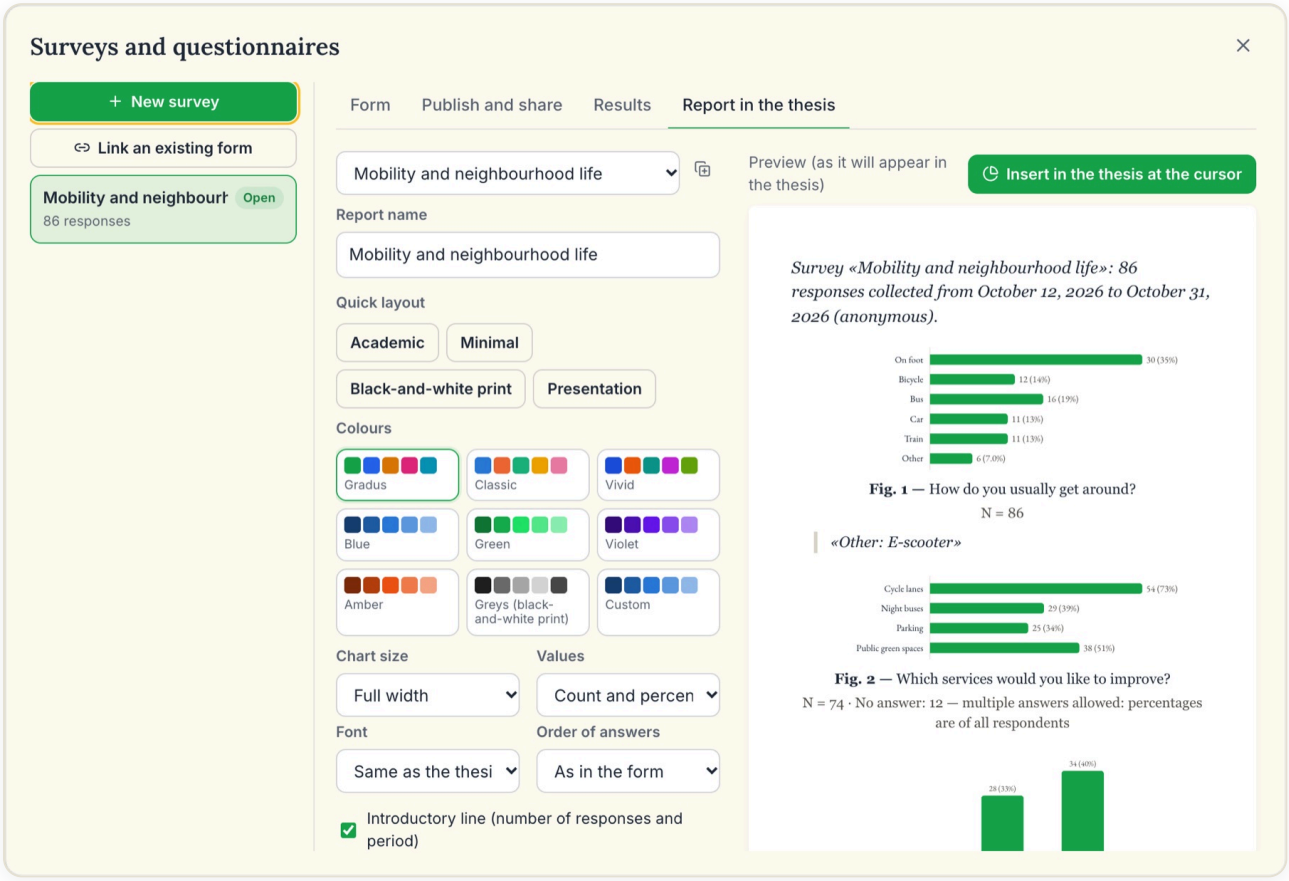
Results



Responses in a table: search, filters, excluded rows and edited cells.

The **Results** tab shows the responses in a **table**: you can search, filter by question, sort, **edit a cell** with a double click (edited cells stay marked), **exclude rows** from the statistics and readmit them, add responses collected on paper with **Row**, and delete rows. **CSV** opens the data in Excel, LibreOffice, Numbers or a statistics program; **Re-import an edited CSV** loads it back. Changes made in Gradus do not touch the original responses on Google and are kept when you download the results again.

The report in the thesis

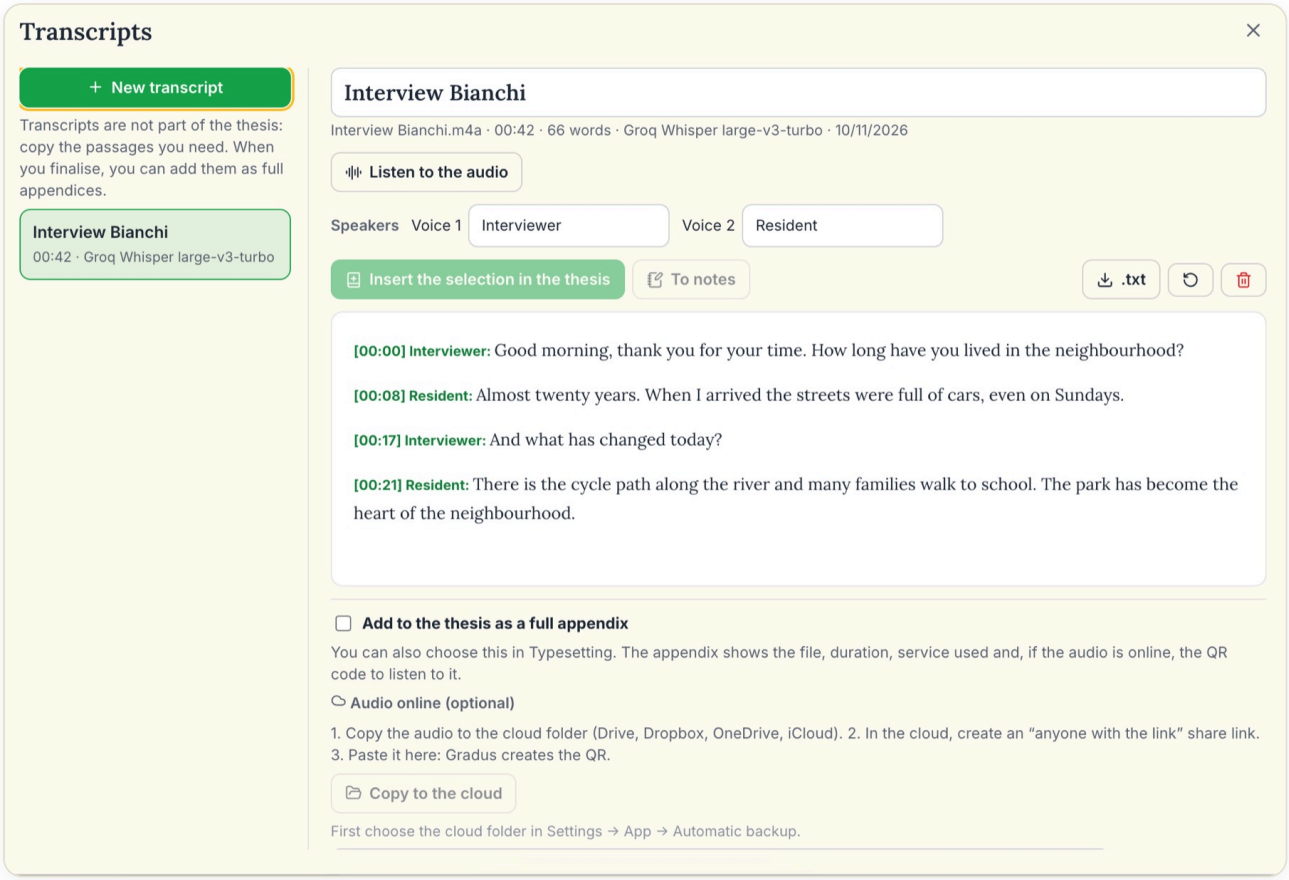


The report: layout, colours and options on the left, a preview of how it will look in the thesis on the right.

In the **Report in the thesis** tab you build the statistical summary. For each question choose the **chart** (automatic, vertical or horizontal bars, pie, donut, stacked bars for grids, histogram, table, most frequent words, quotes from open answers or no chart), the **statistics** (number of responses, mean, median, standard deviation, minimum and maximum), a **cross-tabulation** with another question (for example answers split by age group) and the caption. **Filters** create reports on a subgroup of responses; you can have several reports for the same survey.

For the look there are four **quick layouts** (Academic, Minimal, Black-and-white print, Presentation), nine **colour palettes** — including a grey one with hatching for black-and-white printing and one built on a colour you choose — and options for chart size, font, values shown, answer order, intro line and frame. Press **Insert in the thesis at the cursor**: the report goes into the chapter and **updates itself** when you download new responses or edit the table. In exports and printing each chart becomes a **numbered figure** with a caption.

Transcripts



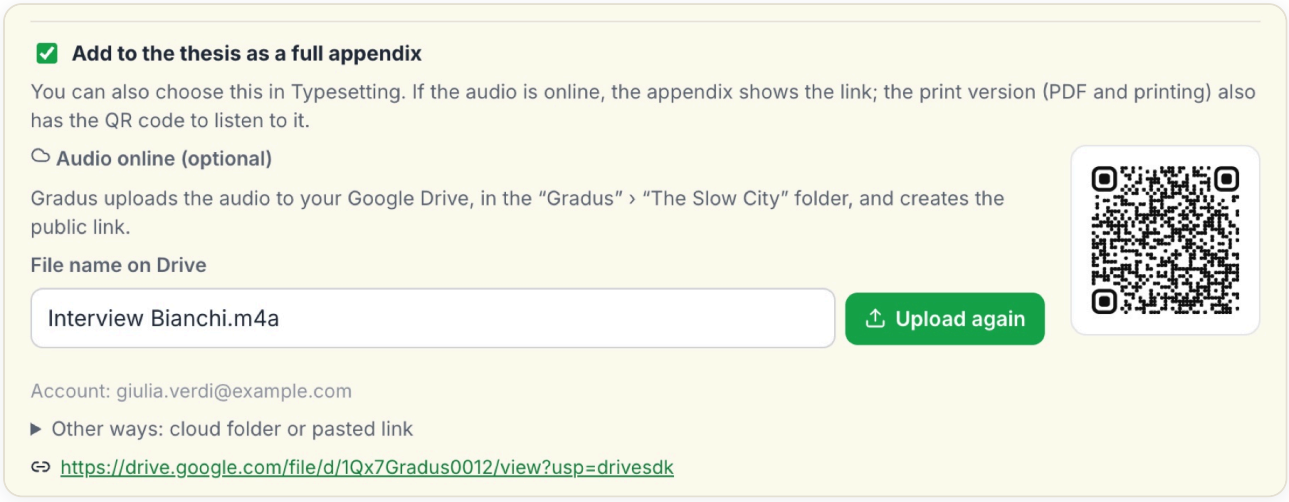
A transcript: click a timestamp to listen again; speakers can be renamed.

Field research → Transcripts turns interviews, lectures and recordings into text (mp3, m4a, wav, ogg, flac, aac, opus, webm, mp4 and other formats). Press **New transcript**, choose one or more files, the language and the service: each file becomes a separate transcript, saved in the thesis file but **outside the text**. You can keep writing while transcription runs.

- **Whisper in the app**: free and offline; on first use it downloads the chosen model (about 45 MB to 600 MB). The larger the model, the more accurate and the slower.
- **Groq**: free with a key and very fast; it is the same key used for voice and the assistant.
- **AssemblyAI** and **Deepgram**: free credits when you sign up; they recognise **who is speaking**.
- A **Whisper server on your computer** or **OpenAI** (paid).

Every paragraph has its **timestamp**: one click plays the audio from that point. You can correct the text and **rename speakers** (for example "Speaker 1" → "Interviewer"). Select a passage and press **Insert the selection in the thesis**: it becomes a quotation with title and timestamp. You can also send it **To notes** or save the transcript as .txt. Ask the people you record for their consent before recording; with online services the audio is sent to the chosen service.

Appendices and audio online



Audio on Google Drive: file name, upload, link and QR code for the appendix.

Transcripts can appear **in full in an appendix**: turn on **Add to the thesis as a full appendix** in the transcript, or choose which ones in **Typesetting** or in **Export (draft)**. Each appendix ("Appendix A — title") lists the file, duration and service used.

To let readers listen to the recording, type the name you want for the audio in **File name on Drive** and press **Upload to Google Drive**. Gradus uses your Google account (the first time your browser opens to grant permission), creates a **Gradus** folder in your Drive with a folder named after the **thesis title** inside it, uploads the audio and creates a **public link** ("anyone with the link"). Gradus only sees the files it creates, not the rest of your Drive. **Upload again** replaces the audio and keeps the same link.

- In the **digital version** (Word, LibreOffice, eBook, website) the appendix shows the clickable **link**.
- In the **print version** (PDF and printing, PDF/A from Typesetting) it shows the link and the **QR code** to scan with a phone.

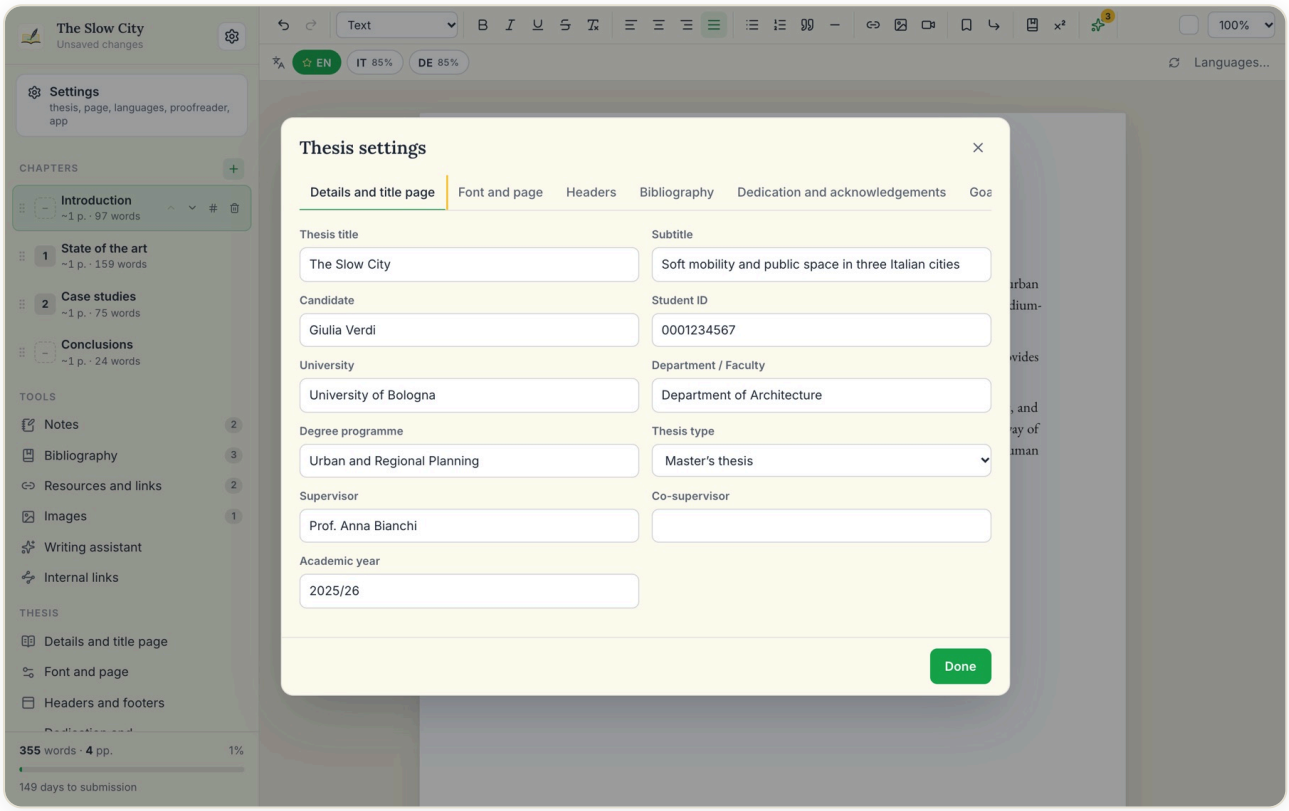
Some university accounts do not allow public links: Gradus tells you, and the file stays visible only to people with access. Under **Other ways** you can still copy the audio to the automatic backup folder or paste a link you created yourself.

16

Thesis settings

All settings are in the sidebar, **Thesis** section, and are saved in the thesis file.

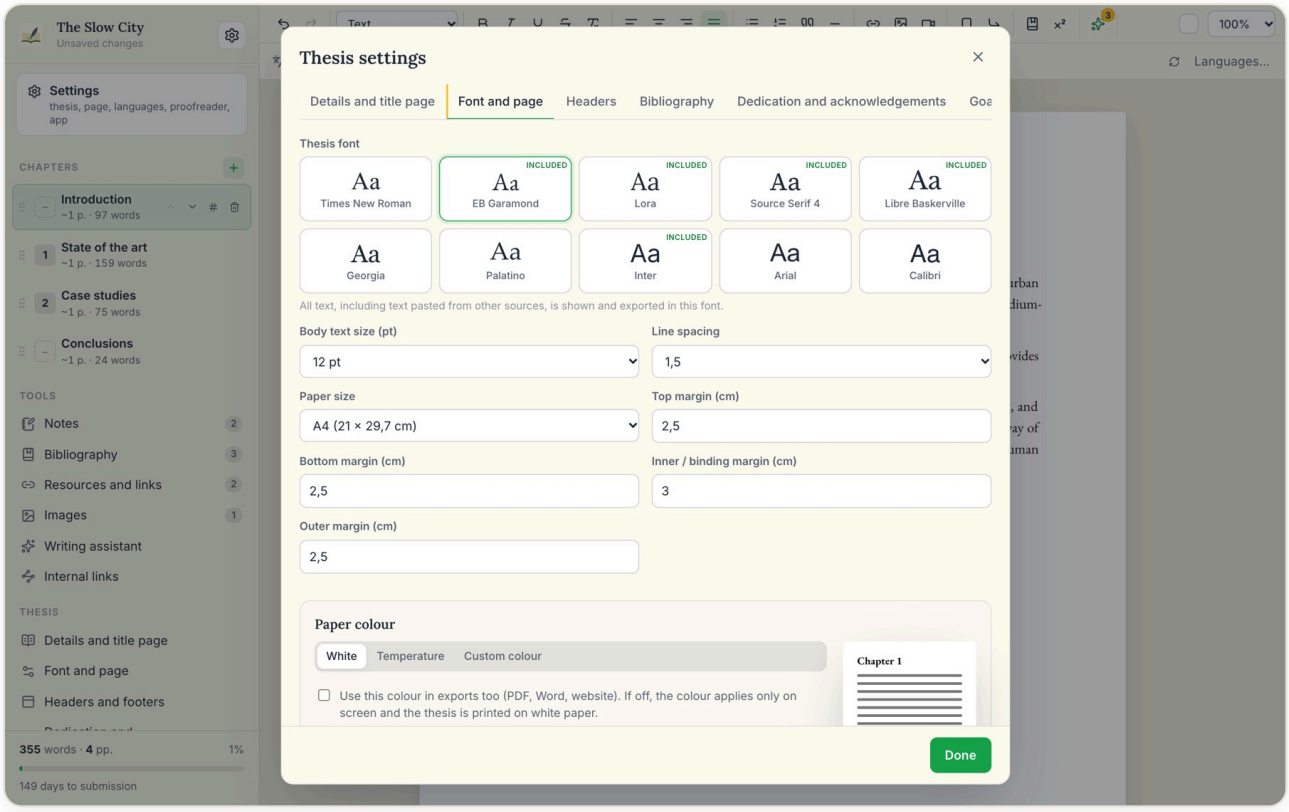
Details and title page



The title page details.

Title, subtitle, candidate and student ID, university, department, degree programme, thesis type, supervisor, co-supervisor and academic year. Gradus uses these details to compose the title page on export.

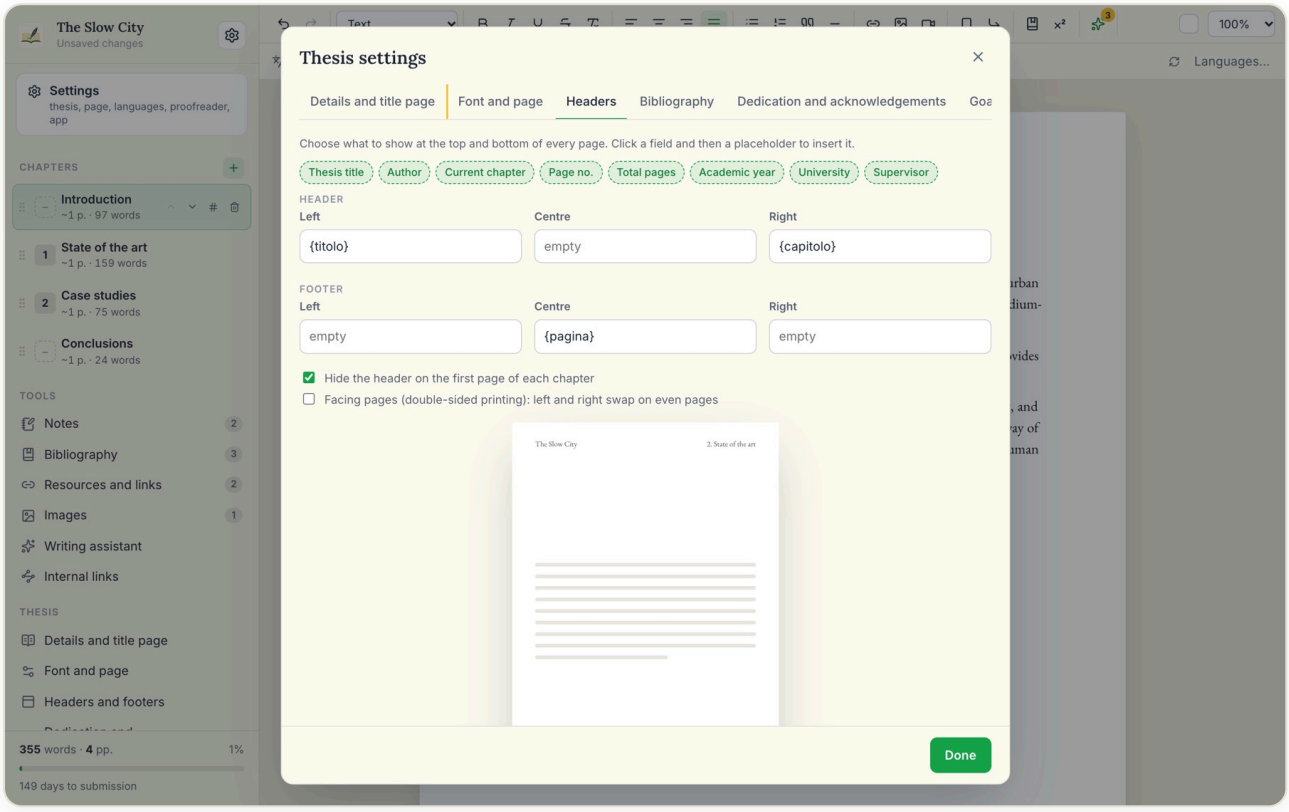
Font and page



Font, size, line spacing, paper size and margins.

Ten fonts including Times New Roman, Garamond, Georgia, Palatino, Arial and Calibri; fonts labelled “included” work on any computer. You can choose size (10–14 pt), line spacing (1–2), paper size (A4, B5, A5, Letter) and the four margins, including the inner margin for binding.

Headers and footers



Six free positions, with preview.

At the top and bottom you have three positions (left, centre, right). In each you can type text and insert **placeholders**: click a field and then the placeholder.

`{titolo}`	thesis title	`{pagina}`	page number
`{autore}`	candidate	`{pagine}`	total pages
`{capitolo}`	current chapter	`{anno}`	academic year
`{università}`	university	`{relatore}`	supervisor

You can hide the header on the first page of each chapter and turn on **facing pages** for double-sided printing: on even pages left and right swap and the inner and outer margins follow the binding.

Dedication and acknowledgements

The dedication is laid out on its own page after the title page, aligned to the right. The acknowledgements can go at the beginning, after the dedication, or at the end of the thesis. Here you can also choose whether to include the table of contents.

Goals and deadline

Set the word goal and the submission date: at the bottom of the sidebar you see the percentage reached and the days left, highlighted when fewer than fourteen remain.

17

Paper colour

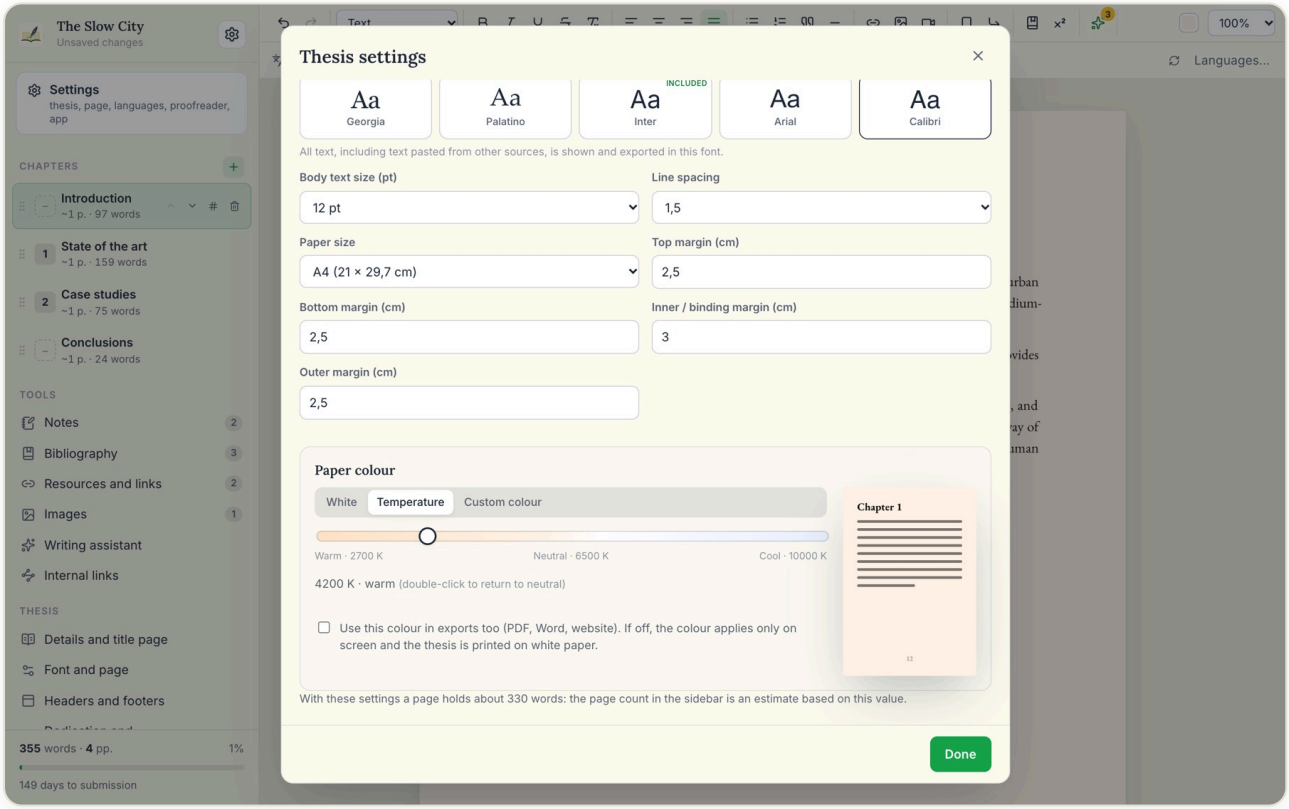
Writing for hours on pure white can tire your eyes. Gradus lets you give the page any colour or temperature, on screen only or in exported files too.

Open **Font and page** and scroll to **Paper colour**, or click the small coloured square on the right of the formatting toolbar. There are three modes:

White

The classic page.

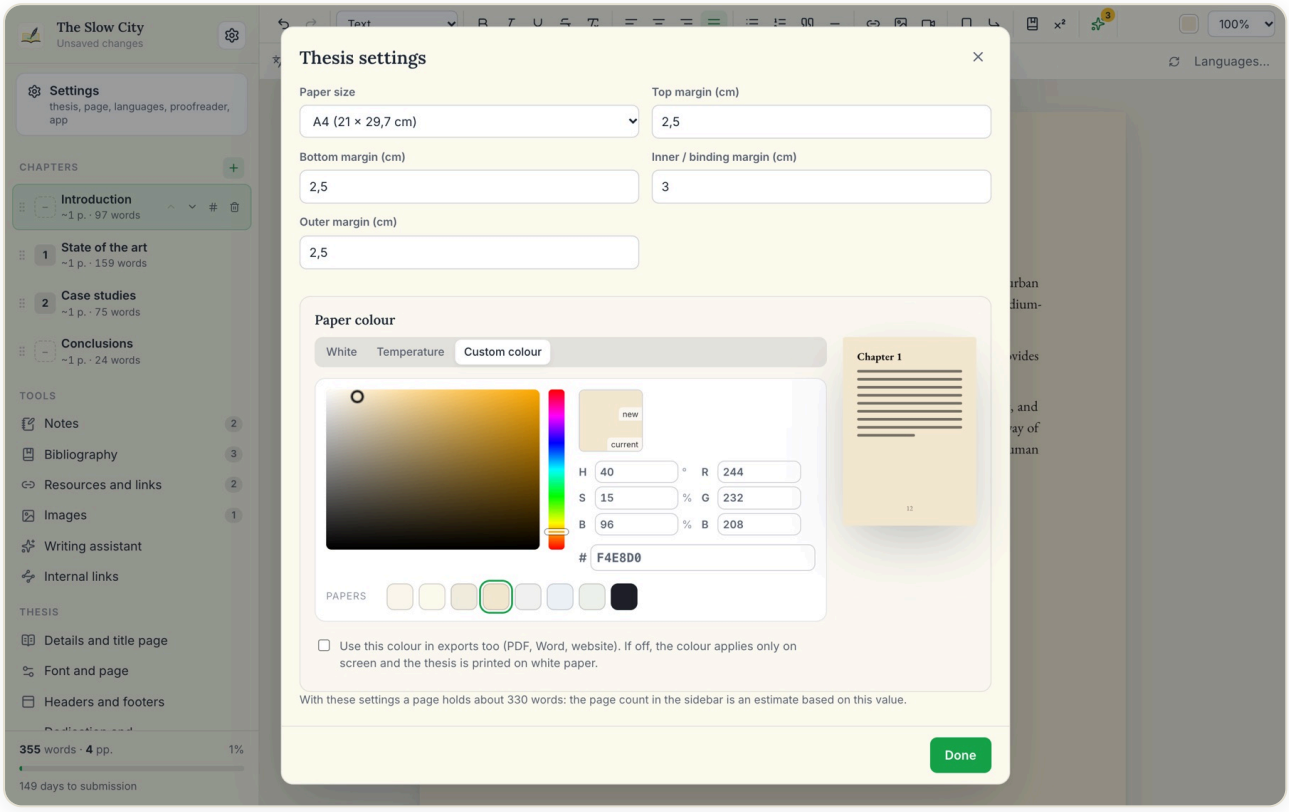
Temperature



Paper temperature, from warm to cool.

The slider goes from 2700 K (warm, like ivory paper) to 10000 K (cool, bluish white); 6500 K is neutral. Double-click the slider to return to neutral.

Custom colour

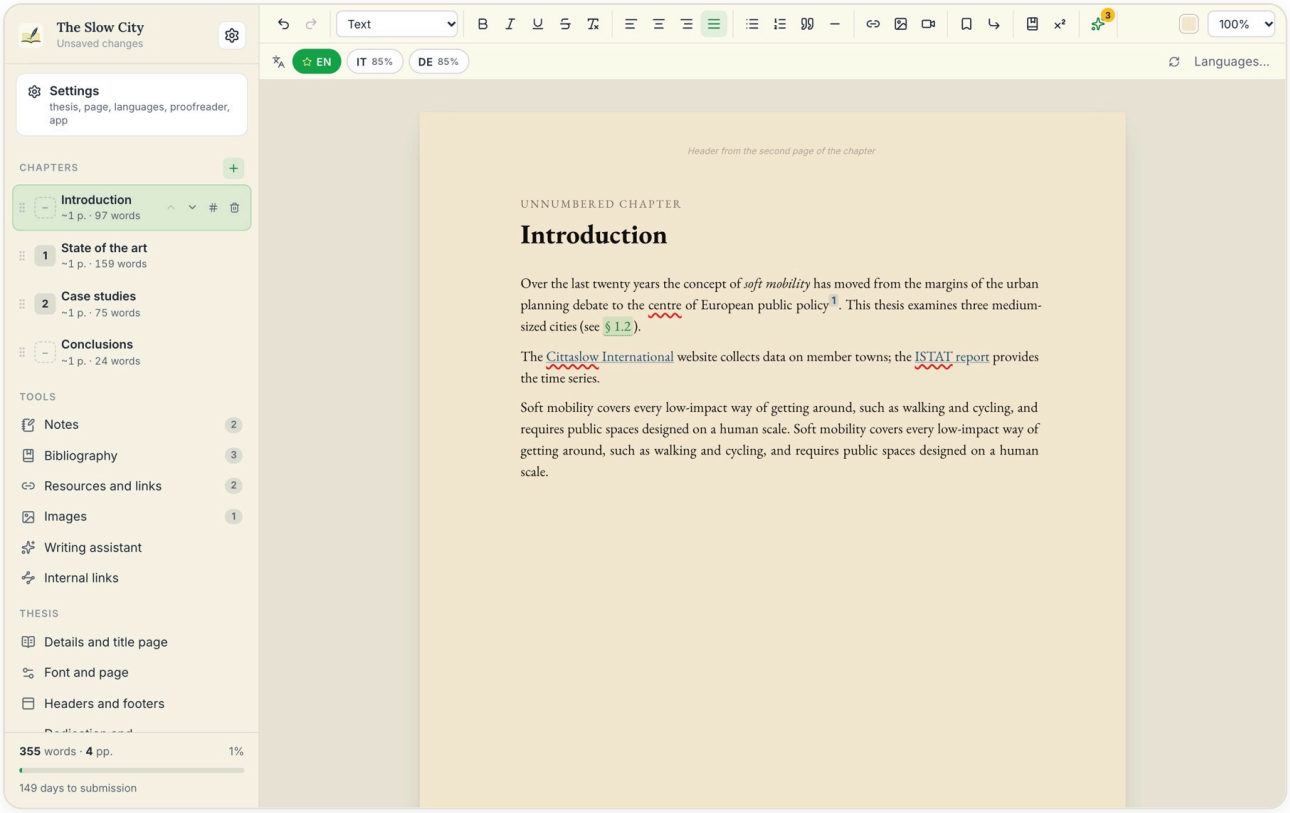


The colour picker: shade field, hue bar, HSB, RGB and hex values.

The picker works like the one in graphics programs:

- the **vertical bar** chooses the hue;
- the **square** chooses the shade: to the right the colour is more saturated, downwards darker. Click or drag; with the square selected you can also use the arrow keys (with Shift for bigger steps);
- the **H S B** and **R G B** fields and the **#** code let you type the exact value;
- the **new / current** box compares the chosen colour with the original one: a click on “current” restores it;
- **papers** are ready-made colours (ivory, cream, recycled paper, sepia, pearl grey, light blue, sage, dark paper) and **recent** remembers the colours you used last.

On dark paper the text turns light automatically, to stay readable.



Sepia paper in the editor.

On screen only or in exports too

The option **Use this colour in exports too** decides whether the colour also applies to PDF, Word and website. If it is off, the colour is just for you on screen and the thesis comes out on white paper, as universities usually require. In Word the page colour shows on screen; to print it, enable “Print background colours and images” in Word’s options.

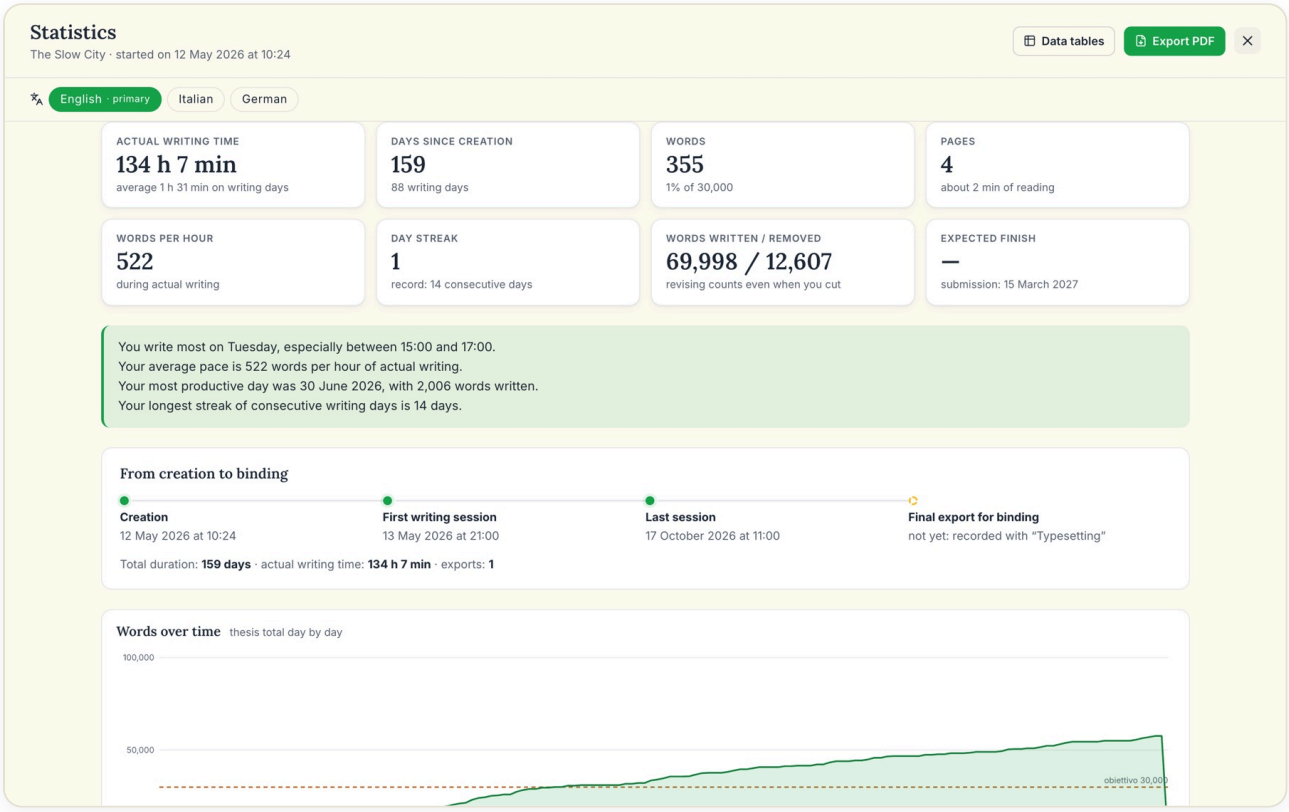
Colour, temperature and the export option are saved in the thesis file.

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Writing statistics

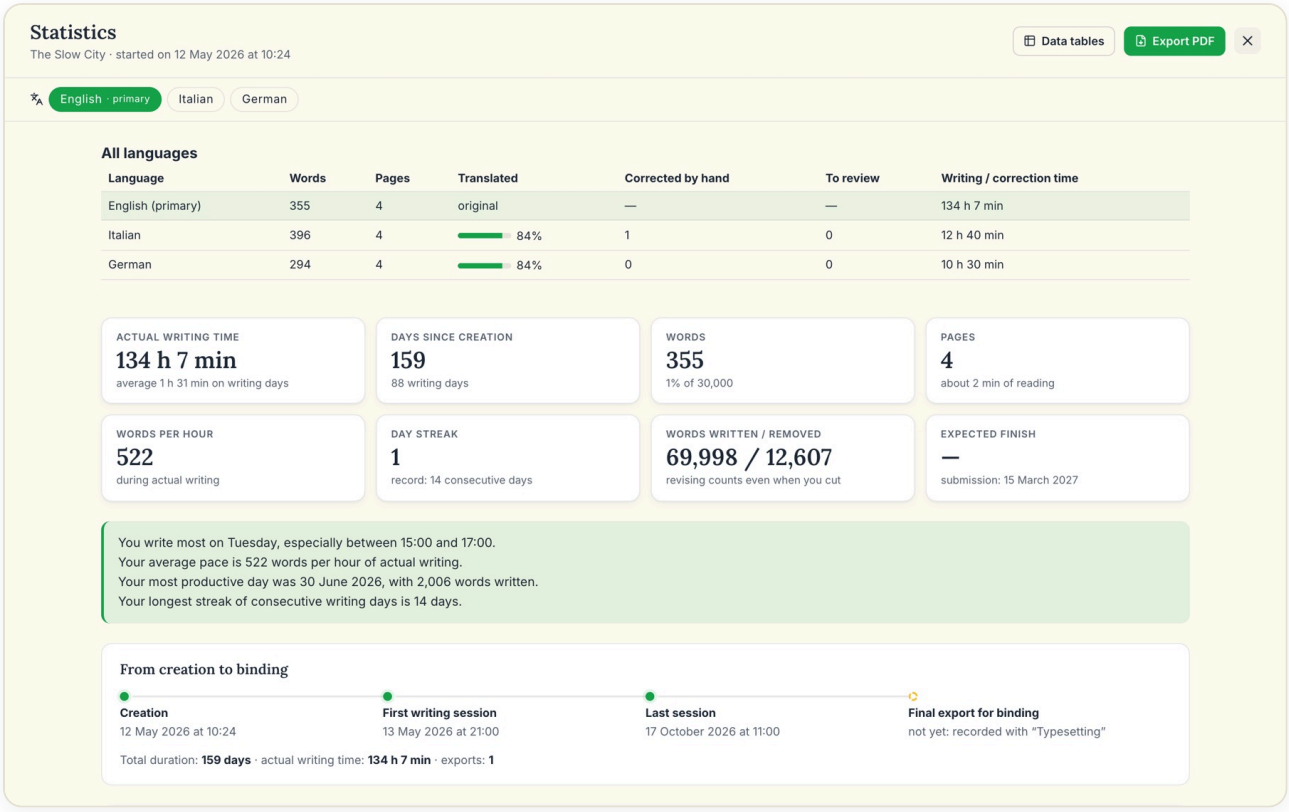
Gradus records how you work on your thesis, from the date and time it was created to the final export for binding: how much you really write, on which days and at what time you work best, how the text grows. Everything stays in the thesis file, on your computer.

Open the statistics from the sidebar, **Thesis → Statistics**, or by clicking the words and pages box at the bottom of the sidebar.



The main indicators, the summary and the timeline from creation to binding.

Statistics per language



Comparing the languages of the thesis.

If the thesis has several languages, a button per language appears at the top together with a table comparing them: words, pages, percentage translated, paragraphs corrected by hand, paragraphs to review and time spent. In secondary languages the indicators show the **correction time** and the words added or removed by hand; the charts follow the chosen language. The statistics PDF is also exported in the chosen language.

Actual writing time

Gradus counts time only while you are really writing: the window must be in the foreground and you must have pressed a key in the last minute. Breaks, reading and hours with the app open in the background are not counted. Along with the time it records, hour by hour, the words added and those removed while revising.

The indicators

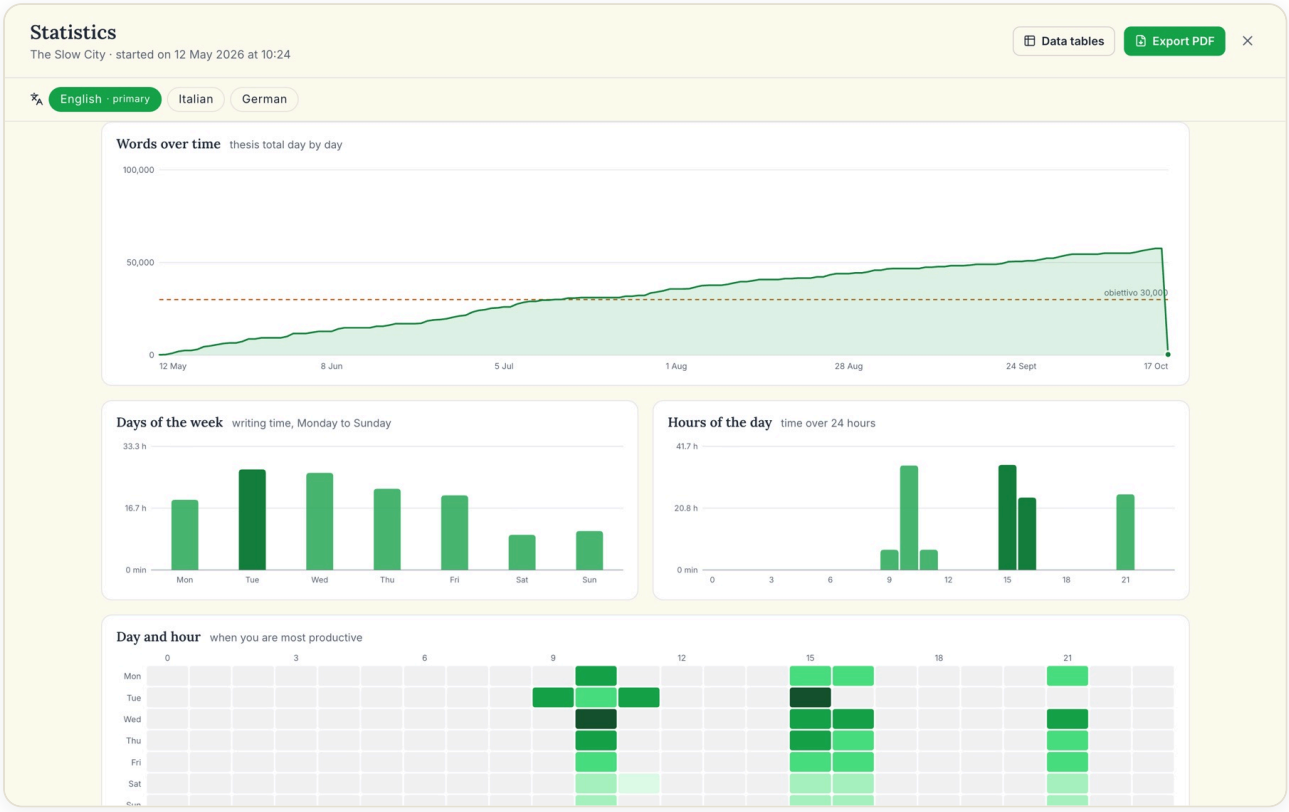
Actual writing time	Total writing hours, with the average on the days you wrote.
Days since creation	From the creation of the thesis to today, or to the final export; how many of these were writing days.
Words and pages	The current total, the percentage of the goal and the estimated reading time.
Words per hour	The average pace during actual writing.
Day streak	Consecutive writing days so far and the record.
Words written / removed	How much you wrote in total and how much you cut while revising.
Expected finish	The date on which you will reach the word goal at the pace of the last fourteen days.

Below the indicators, a few summary sentences tell you when you are most productive, your best day and your longest streak.

The timeline

It shows the date and time of the thesis's **creation**, of the **first** and **last writing session** and of the **final export for binding**. The latter is recorded only with **Typesetting** (chapter "Typesetting: the final version"); printing and draft exports do not count.

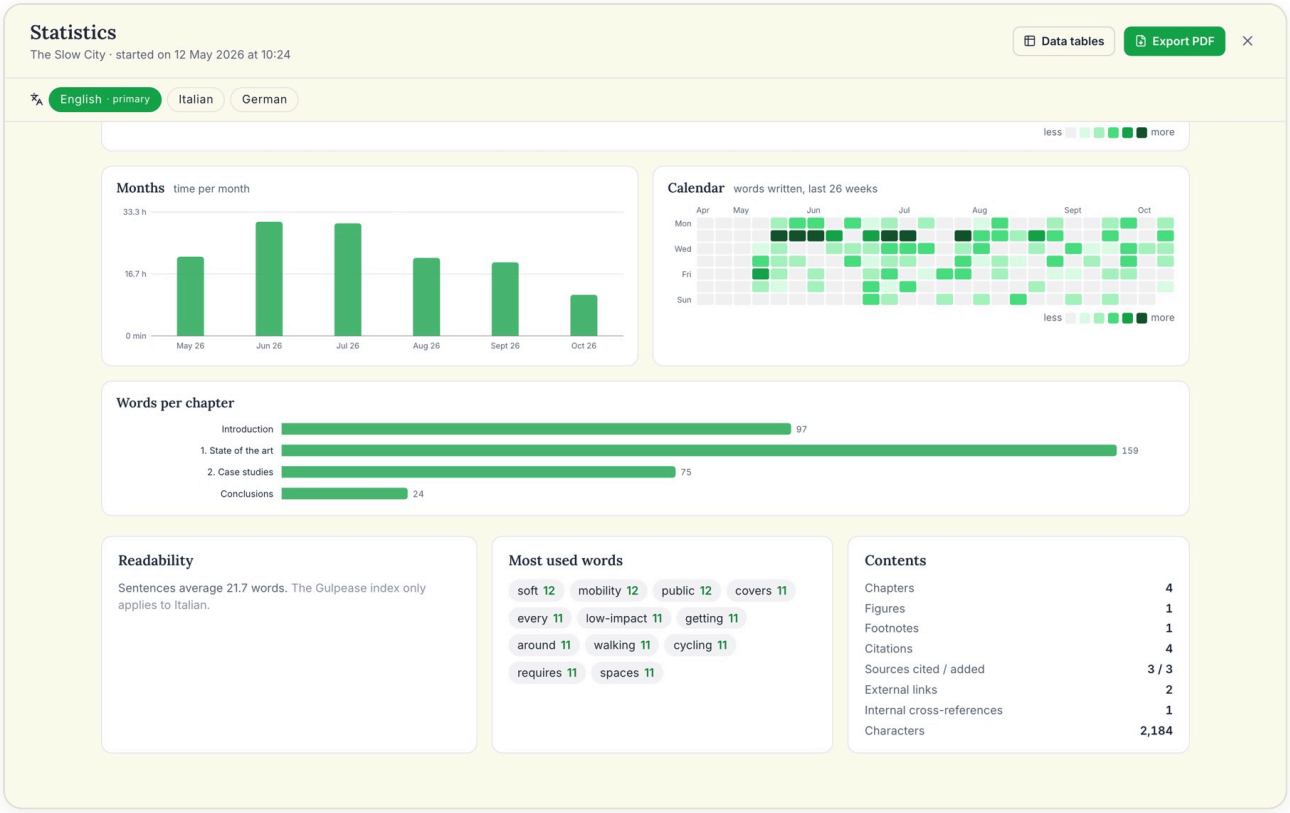
The charts



Words over time, days of the week, hours of the day and the day × hour map.

- **Words over time**: how the thesis grows day by day, with the goal line;
- **Days of the week**: writing time from Monday to Sunday; the most productive day is darker;
- **Hours of the day**: writing time across the 24 hours, with the best time slot highlighted;
- **Day and hour**: a map crossing days and hours, darker where you write most;
- **Months**: writing time month by month, from creation to today;
- **Calendar**: words written each day over the last 26 weeks;
- **Words per chapter**: the balance between chapters.

Hovering over a bar or a cell shows the exact value. **Data tables** turns the same data into tables.



Months, calendar, words per chapter, readability, most used words and contents.

Text analysis

- **Gulpease index** (Italian only): readability from 0 (very hard) to 100 (very easy). An academic text usually sits between 40 and 60. Next to it is the average sentence length: above 30 words it is worth splitting sentences.
- **Most used words**: the most frequent meaningful words, useful for spotting repetitions (not available for languages without spaces between words).
- **Contents**: chapters, figures (with those to check), notes, citations, sources, links, cross-references and characters.

Exporting the statistics as PDF

Export PDF lays out an A4 report with indicators, timeline, all charts, the data tables and the list of exports. It is saved as PDF from the print dialog, like the thesis. It can accompany the thesis or serve as a work log for meetings with your supervisor.

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Saving and closing

- **Save** (⌘S / Ctrl+S) writes the thesis to a `.gradus` file; the first time it asks where to save it. **Save as:** ⌘⇧S / Ctrl+Shift+S. The **Save** button is always at the top of the sidebar, next to the gear: it turns green when there are changes to save.
- **Open with a double-click.** `.gradus` files carry the Gradus icon: double-clicking the file in Finder, File Explorer or the Linux file manager opens the thesis in Gradus, even if the app is already running. The Linux AppImage does not install the association: use the .deb or .rpm package. On a Mac, if your files do not show the icon yet, move Gradus to the Applications folder and open it once from there: Gradus registers itself every time it starts.
- After the first save Gradus **saves by itself** to the thesis file two seconds after every change.
- It also keeps an automatic **backup copy**, which you can resume from the welcome screen.
- Saving is safe: Gradus first writes a temporary file and replaces the old one only when writing is complete, so a sudden interruption cannot damage the thesis.

Closing the app

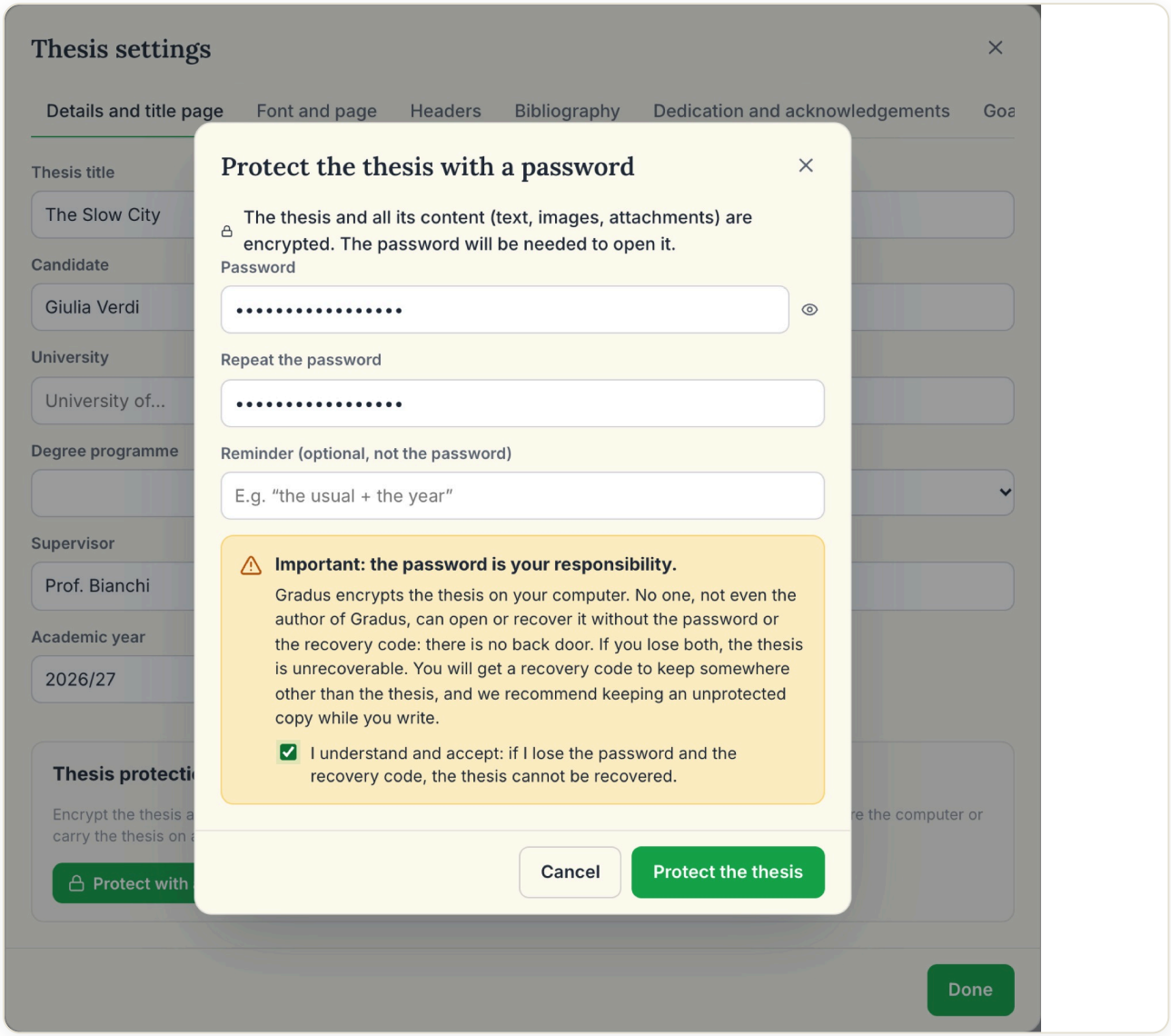
When you close the window or quit Gradus (⌘Q on Mac, Alt+F4 on Windows and Linux) with unsaved changes, Gradus asks:

- **Save**: saves the thesis (asking where, if it is new) and closes;
- **Don’t save**: closes without saving; your latest changes remain only in the backup copy;
- **Cancel**: goes back to the thesis.

The highlighted button is **Save**, so pressing Enter loses nothing. If everything is already saved, Gradus closes without asking.

> **Backup.** The `.gradus` file contains the whole thesis, images included. Save it in a synced folder (iCloud Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Drive) to always have an up-to-date copy.

Protecting the thesis with a password



The protection dialog with the warning and the recovery code.

From **Settings → Thesis details → Thesis protection** you can encrypt the `.gradus` file — text, images and attachments — with a **password** you choose. Pick the password, accept the warning and Gradus generates a **recovery code**: keep it somewhere other than the thesis, as it opens the file if you forget the password. You can **change the password**, **regenerate the code** or **remove protection** from the same screen.

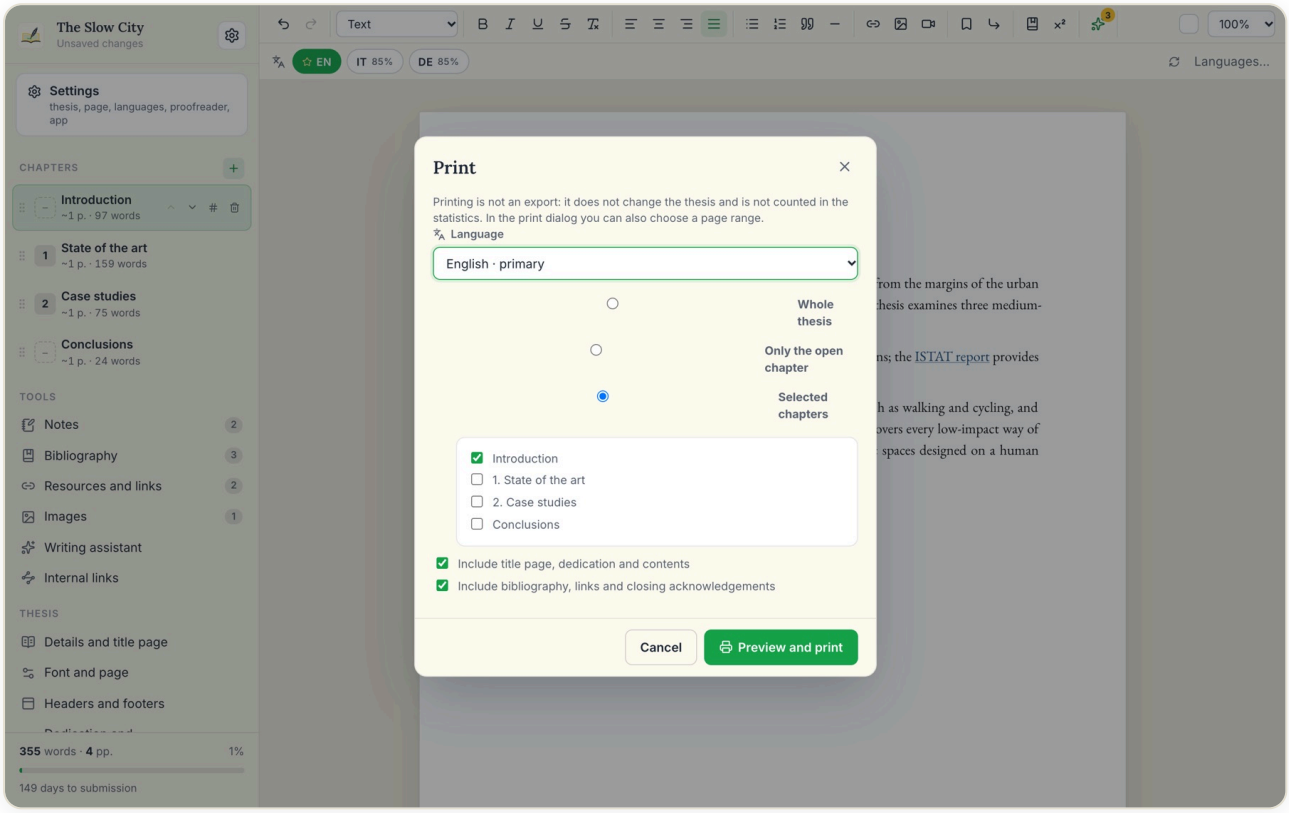
Important: encryption happens on your computer. No one, not even the author of Gradus, can open the file without the password or the recovery code: there is no back door. If you lose both, the thesis is unrecoverable. Keep the password and code safe, and while writing keep an unprotected copy or the automatic backup anyway.

Automatic cloud backup

From **Settings → App → Automatic backup** choose a folder on your computer: on every save Gradus copies the thesis there. If you choose the folder of a cloud service already installed (OneDrive, Dropbox, iCloud Drive, Google Drive), the cloud app syncs the copy online. Gradus creates a folder **“Thesis title - Name Surname”** containing **“Backup”** (the copy on every save) and **“Revisione”** (chapters sent to the supervisor). The version history is kept by the cloud service.

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Printing



The Print window (⌘P / Ctrl+P).

You do not need to export to print. From **File → Print…** choose:

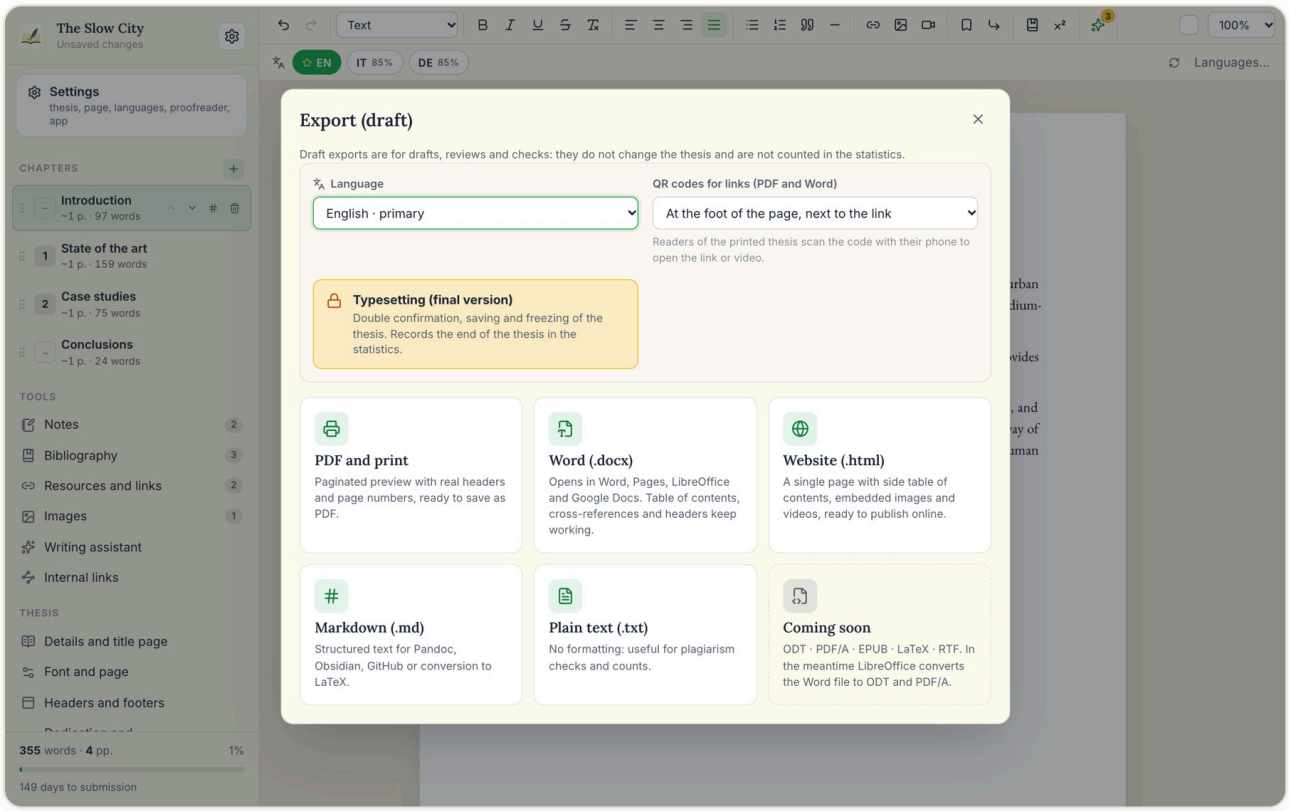
- **Whole thesis**, **only the open chapter** or **selected chapters**;
- whether to include title page, dedication and contents and, at the end, bibliography, links and acknowledgements;
- the **language**, if the thesis has more than one.

Gradus lays out the chosen pages with headers, notes and page numbers and opens the system print dialog, where you can also enter a page range. Printing does not change the thesis and is not counted in the statistics.

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Draft export

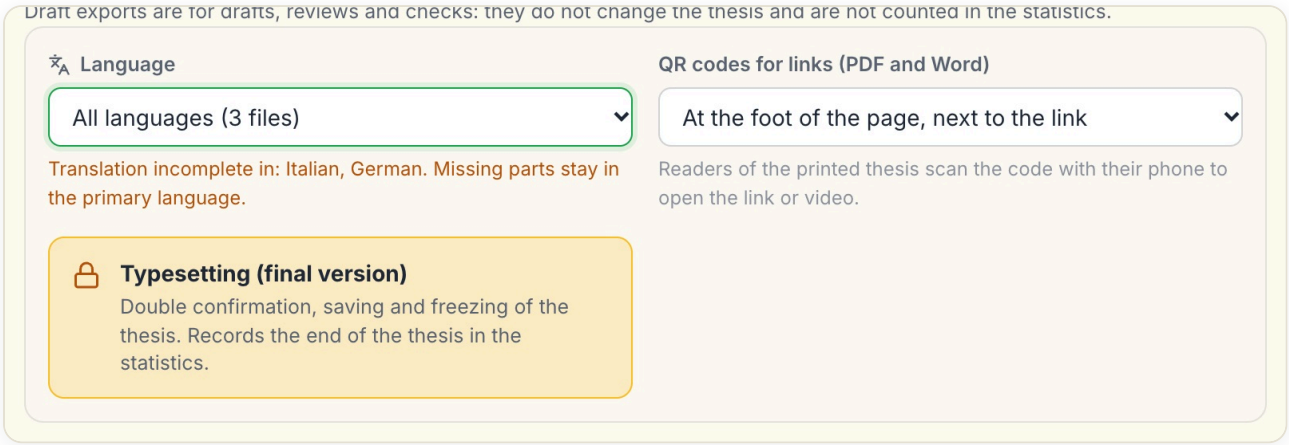
Draft export is for drafts, reviews with your supervisor and checks: you can do it as often as you like, it does not change the thesis and **is not counted in the statistics**. The version to submit is prepared with **Typesetting** instead (next chapter).



The Export (draft) window (⌘E / Ctrl+E).

FORMAT	USE
PDF and print	Real page layout with title page, dedication, contents with page numbers, footnotes, headers and bibliography.
PDF/A	Submission and archiving: PDF/A-2b with embedded fonts, colour profile and standard metadata.
Word (.docx)	Review with your supervisor, Pages, LibreOffice, Google Docs. Contents, cross-references, notes and headers keep working.
Website (.html)	Online publication: a single file with side contents, images and videos, readable on phones too.
Markdown (.md)	Pandoc, Obsidian, GitHub; notes in Pandoc format.
Text (.txt)	Plagiarism checks and counts.

One language or all

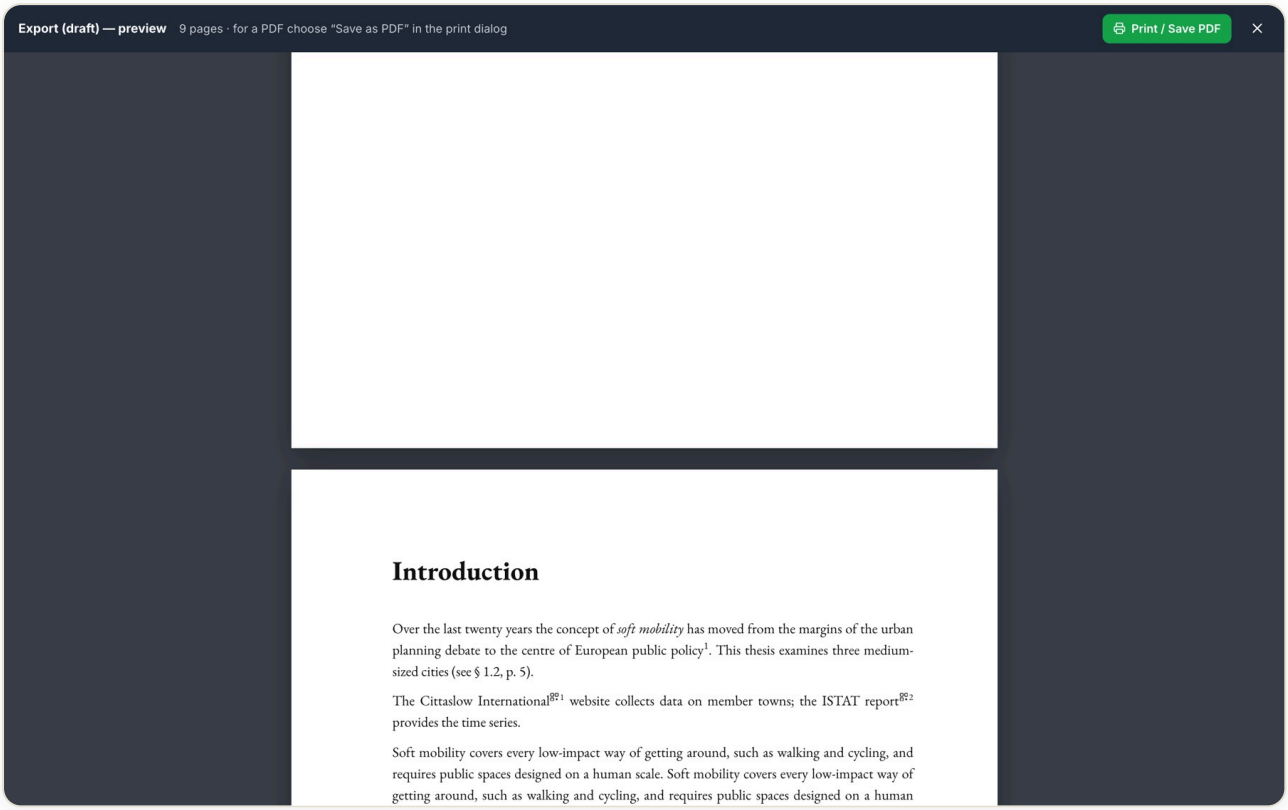


The language selector: one language or all, with the percentage translated.

If the thesis has several languages, choose which one to export or **All languages**. In each file the title page, headings, labels (“Chapter”, “Contents”, “Bibliography”), citations and notes are in the chosen language; Arabic and other right-to-left languages are laid out in the right direction. If a translation is incomplete Gradus tells you: missing parts stay in the reference language.

Files are named **“Thesis title - Language”**, for example `The Slow City – Deutsch.docx`. With **All languages** the app asks for a folder and saves one file per language there. For the PDF, a menu in the preview lets you switch language: save one PDF for each.

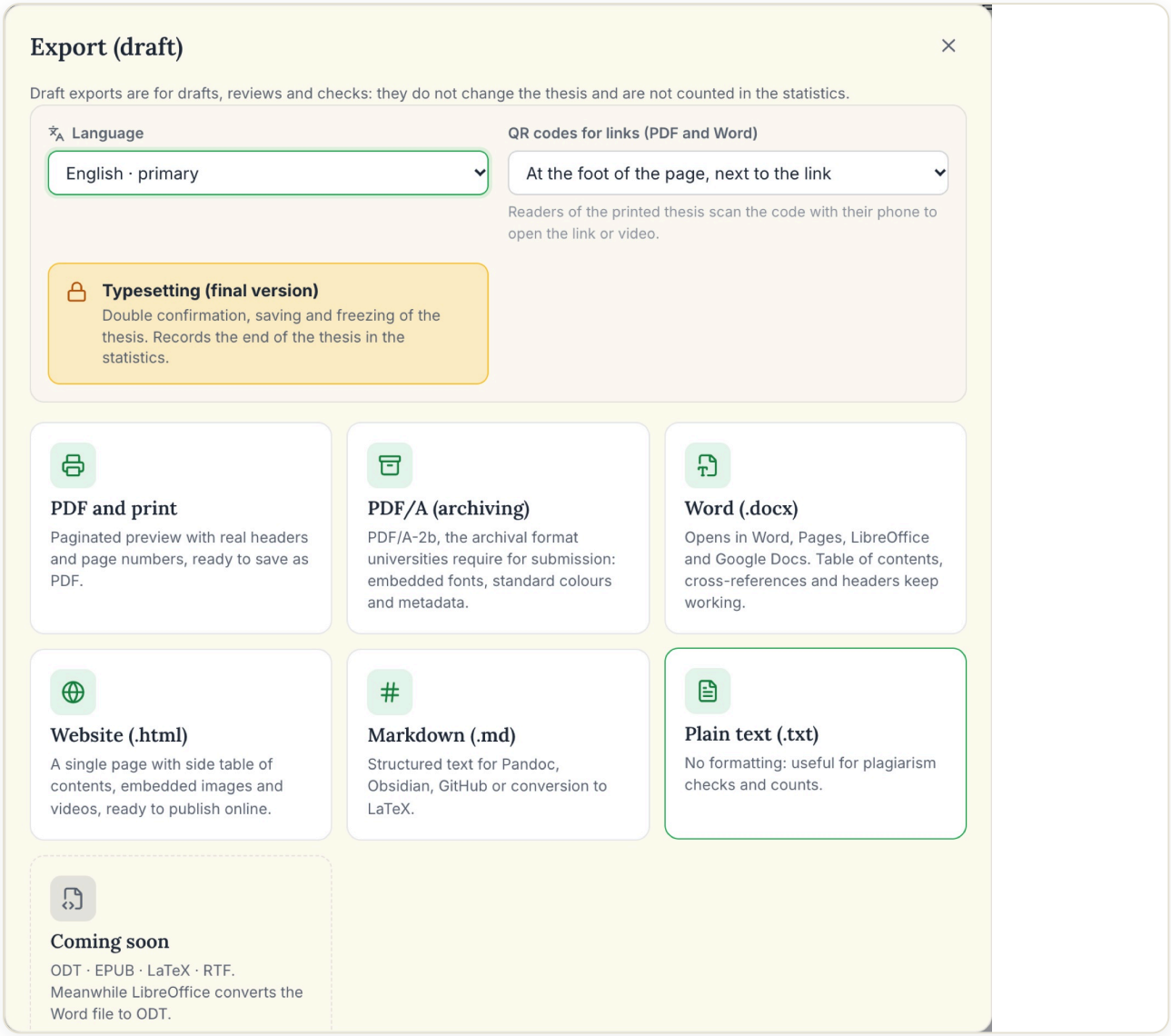
PDF



The print preview shows the pages as they will be printed.

Choose **PDF and print**: Gradus lays out the thesis and shows the preview. Press **Print / Save PDF** and, in the system print dialog, choose **Save as PDF** (macOS: PDF menu at bottom left; Windows: the “Microsoft Print to PDF” printer). Pages are numbered continuously from the title page; numbers and contents always match.

PDF/A for submission



The PDF/A option and the "Save PDF/A" button in the preview.

Many universities require the thesis in **PDF/A**, the long-term archival format. Choose **PDF/A (archiving)** in the Export (draft) window, or press **Save PDF/A** in the print or Typography preview: on macOS and Windows Gradus creates the file directly, without the print dialog, and asks where to save it as "Thesis title - Language (PDF-A).pdf".

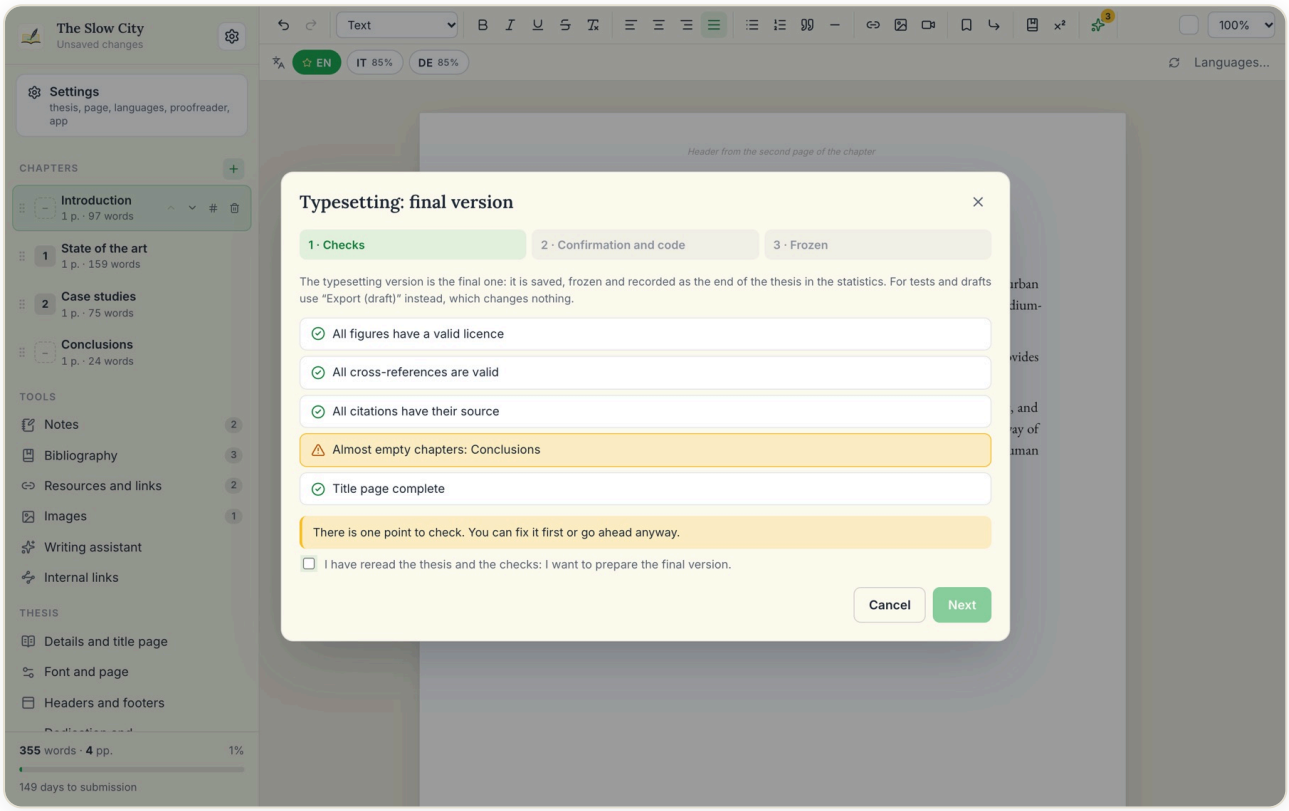
The file is a **PDF/A-2b**: embedded fonts, sRGB colour profile, metadata (title, author, language) and compliant links. Gradus checks it during development with the reference validator veraPDF.

On Linux PDF/A is created in two steps: save the PDF with **Print / Save PDF**, then choose that file in the panel that appears: Gradus converts it to PDF/A.

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Typesetting: the final version

When the thesis is ready for the print shop or for deposit, use **File → Typesetting**. Gradus saves the thesis, **freezes** it so it can no longer change and records the date and time as the end of the thesis in the statistics.



The first step: checks before the final version.

The three steps

1. **Checks.** Gradus checks the title page, figure licences, cross-references, citations and empty chapters and tells you what to fix. To go on, tick the **first confirmation**: you have reread the thesis and want to prepare the final version.
2. **Confirmation and code.** Choose an **unlock code** (at least 4 characters, typed twice) and tick the **second confirmation**. **Save and freeze** saves the thesis to a file; if you cancel saving, freezing is cancelled too.
3. **Frozen.** Now create the PDF for typesetting and, if you like, a Word copy, in one language or all.

A frozen thesis

A frozen thesis opens read-only: a strip above the page reminds you and nothing can be edited. You can still print, export drafts and look at the statistics.

Unfreezing

To edit it again use **Unfreeze…** in the strip above the page: you need the unlock code and to confirm that you are authorised to edit the final version. Unfreezing is recorded in the statistics.

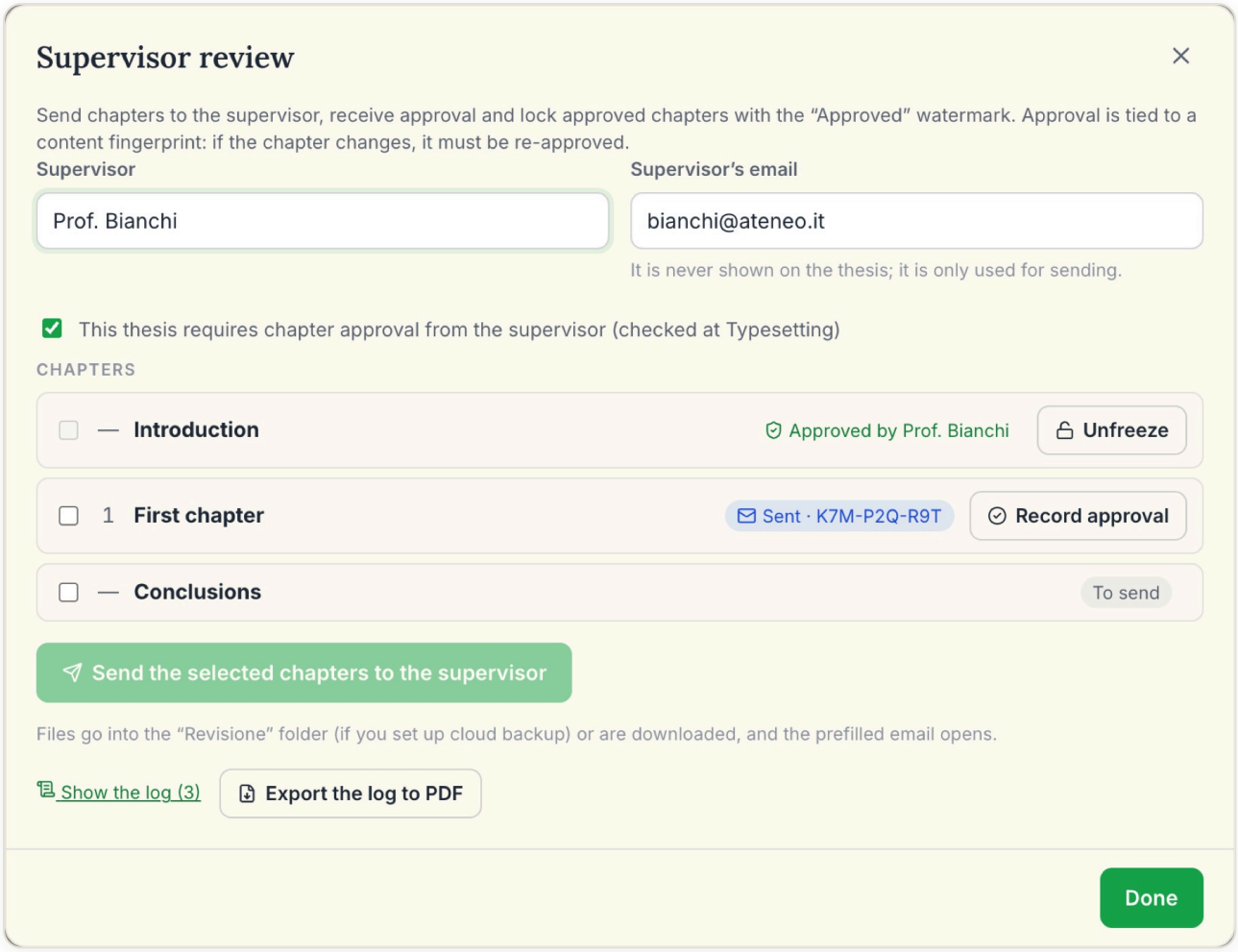
> **Keep the code safe.** The code is not stored in plain text and cannot be recovered. If you lose it, the thesis can still be read and exported, but not edited.

Before submitting

- ✓ No figures with a licence “to check”.
- ✓ No cross-references or citations in red.
- ✓ Citation style, font, margins and title page as your programme’s rules require.
- ✓ Paper colour not exported, if your university requires white paper.
- ✓ Translations complete and reviewed, if you submit the thesis in several languages.

The Typography preview also offers **Save PDF/A**: a PDF/A saved from here is recorded as the final version, like the PDF and Word files.

Review with your supervisor



The Review window: chapter status, sending and approval.

The **Review** feature (sidebar → Review) supports chapter approval by the supervisor. Turn it on only if your thesis needs it: the "This thesis requires approval" switch can be changed at any time by confirming with the thesis password, and every enable or disable stays in the **log**.

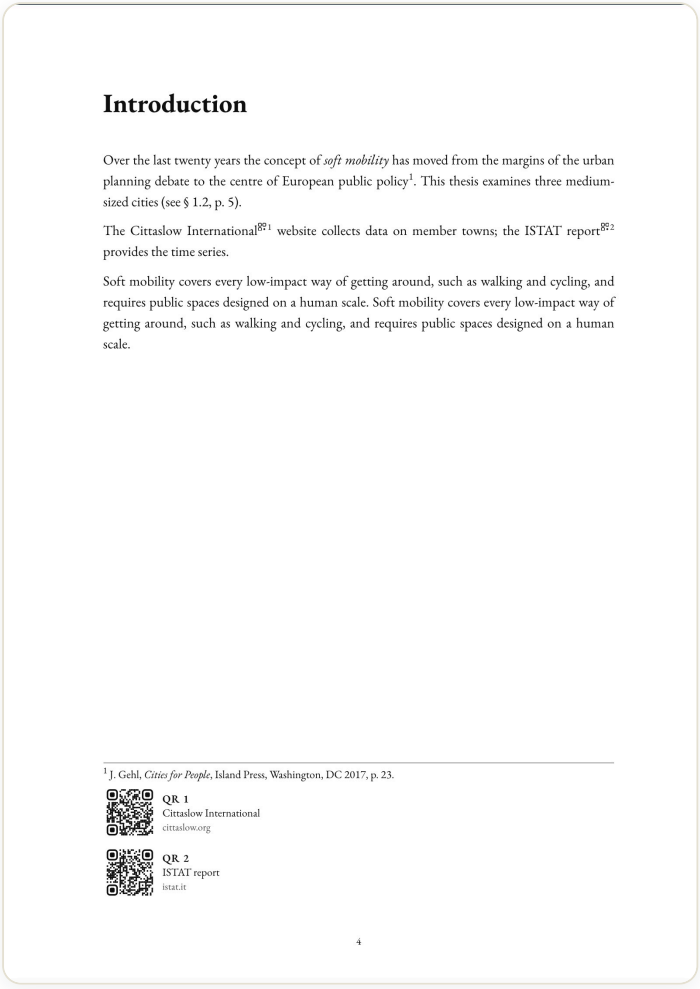
- **Sending.** Enter the supervisor's name and **email** (never shown on the thesis), pick the chapters and press **Send**: Gradus exports each chapter to a file "Name Surname - Title - Chapter XX title" in the "Revisione" folder (or downloads it) and opens a **prefilled email**, with the link to the cloud folder or the files to attach. Each chapter has an **approval code**.
- **Approval.** The supervisor reads, corrects or approves. To approve, they tell you the code; you enter it in **Record approval** with their name. Gradus checks, through a **content fingerprint**, that the chapter has not changed since sending, then **locks** it: it can no longer be edited and an "**Approved**" watermark appears on every page. An approved chapter can still be moved (only the number in the title changes).
- **Unlocking.** With the thesis password you can unlock a chapter: it loses the watermark and must be re-approved.
- **Typesetting.** If review is on, Typesetting does not freeze the thesis until every chapter is approved and unchanged.

- **Log.** Enables, sends, approvals, unlocks and edits made while review was off stay in a log you can **export to PDF**, which cannot be edited.

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QR codes for links

On paper a link cannot be clicked. On export Gradus creates a QR code for every link and video in the thesis: whoever reads the printed copy points the phone camera at it and opens the page or video straight away.



Introduction

Over the last twenty years the concept of *soft mobility* has moved from the margins of the urban planning debate to the centre of European public policy[1]. This thesis examines three medium-sized cities (see § 1.2, p. 5).

The Cittaslow International website collects data on member towns; the ISTAT report provides the time series.

Soft mobility covers every low-impact way of getting around, such as walking and cycling, and requires public spaces designed on a human scale. Soft mobility covers every low-impact way of getting around, such as walking and cycling, and requires public spaces designed on a human scale.

[1] J. Gehl, *Cities for People*, Island Press, Washington, DC 2017, p. 23.

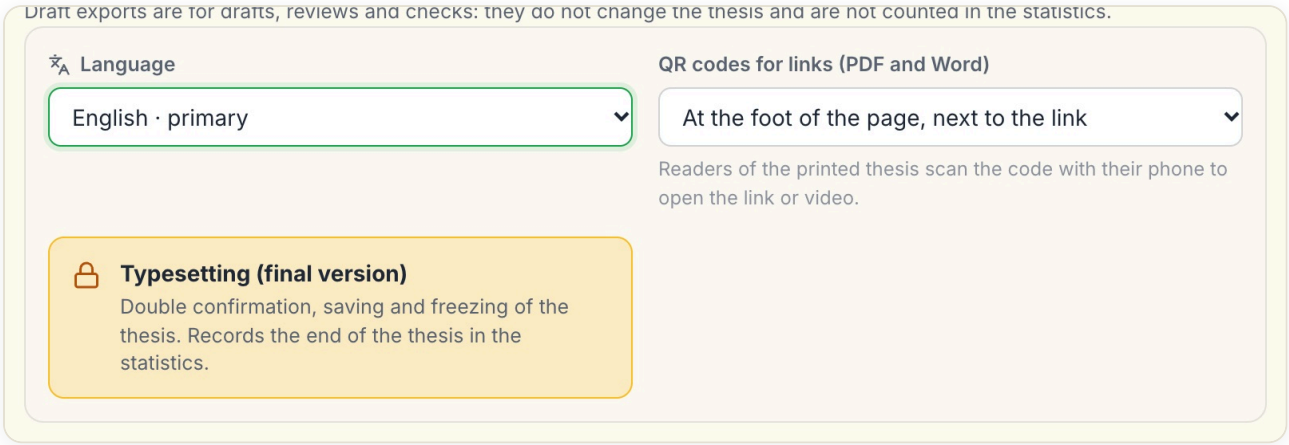
QR 1
Cittaslow International
cittaslow.org

QR 2
ISTAT report
istat.it

4

QR codes at the foot of the page, below the notes, with the reference next to the link.

Where they appear



The QR codes option in the export window.

Choose in the Export (draft) window, under **QR codes for links**; the setting also applies to Typesetting:

- **At the foot of the page, next to the link**: the code sits at the bottom of the same page as the link, below the notes, with number, link text and shortened address. In the text, next to the link, a small symbol with the number appears (e.g. QR 2);
- **In an appendix, all together**: the codes are collected in the “Links” section at the end of the thesis, three per row and included in the contents; the numbered reference stays in the text;
- **No QR codes**.

In the Word file the codes are always in the appendix. In the web version links are already clickable, so codes are not needed. If the same link appears several times, it has a single code and the same number.

The design

The codes have modules with rounded corners and rounded “eyes”, in the same colour as the thesis text; the caption uses the thesis font. On coloured paper the code takes the text colour; on dark paper it sits on a light tile to stay readable.

> **Guaranteed readability.** The code style has been verified with an automatic decoder at several sizes. Printed, the codes measure 1.6 cm at the foot of the page and 2.9 cm in the appendix: any phone reads them without trouble.

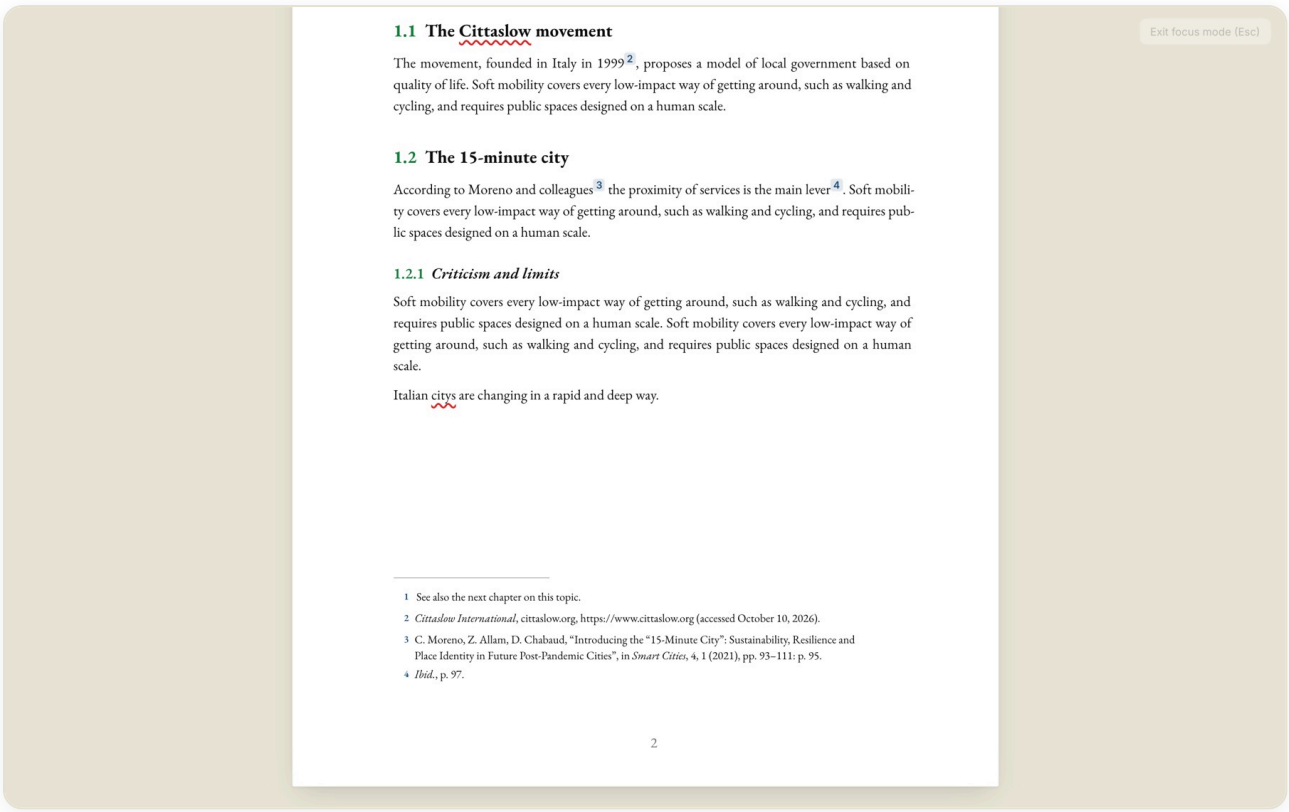
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Keyboard shortcuts

On Windows and Linux use Ctrl instead of ⌘.

⌘S	Save	⌘⇧S	Save as
⌘O	Open a thesis	⌘E	Export (draft)
⌘P	Print		
⌘B	Bold	⌘I	Italic
⌘U	Underline	⌘K	External link
⌘Z	Undo	⌘⇧Z	Redo
⌘⇧C	Cite a source	⌘⇧N	Footnote
⌘⇧F	Focus mode	Esc	Leaves focus mode, closes windows
⌘+click	Follows a cross-reference	Double-click	Edits a citation
⌘,	Settings	⌘⇧A	Writing assistant
⌘⇧L	Read aloud	⌘⇧D	Dictation

Focus mode



Just you and the page.

Focus mode hides the sidebar and tools. Leave it with **Esc** or the button at the top right. From the File menu you can also choose the interface theme: automatic (follows the system), light or dark.

25

FAQ and troubleshooting

Do questionnaire responses go through a Gradus server?

No. Forms and responses live in your Google account and come straight into the app.

Why does Google say “unverified app”?

Because Google has not yet finished verifying Gradus. Forms and responses still stay in your account: choose **Advanced** and then **Go to Gradus**.

Can I transcribe offline?

Yes, with **Whisper in the app**: you only need the network the first time, to download the model.

Can I protect the thesis with a password?

Yes, from **Settings → Thesis details → Protection**. The file is encrypted; you get a recovery code to keep. Without the password or the code no one can open it, not even the author of Gradus: keep both safe.

How does review with the supervisor work?

From **Review** you send chapters, receive an approval code, enter it, and the chapter is locked with an “Approved” watermark. It is optional and everything stays in a log you can export to PDF.

The checker flags the terms of my field.

Add them one by one with **Add to dictionary**, or prepare a list (one word per line) and load it in **Settings → Proofreader and assistant → Custom dictionaries**.

I want spell checking offline.

Add the free dictionary for your language (Hunspell) and choose **Custom dictionaries** as the checker. It checks spelling only; grammar needs LanguageTool.

How do I report a problem or suggest a feature?

From the website’s **Contact** page, choosing the reason; you can attach a screenshot or your thesis file (3 MB maximum).

My university requires PDF/A.

Export with **PDF/A (archiving)** or press **Save PDF/A** in the Typography preview. The file is PDF/A-2b; if your university asks for another variant, check with the office whether 2b is accepted (it almost always is).

I imported a PDF but I can’t edit the text.

You imported it as an **original attachment**: the pages are locked on purpose. To work on the text, import it again and choose **Integrated, editable text**. If the PDF is a scan there is no text and it can only be attached.

The microphone doesn't work.

Allow Gradus to use it in your system settings (on a Mac: Privacy & Security → Microphone) and check which microphone is selected. In Settings → Voice, **Test the microphone** checks that your voice gets through.

Reading says there is no voice for my language.

Install a voice for that language in your system settings, or choose OpenAI voices in Settings → Voice.

Dictation doesn't start on Windows or Linux.

System recognition is often missing there: enter a free Groq key in Settings → Voice.

Where are the settings?

The **Settings** button at the top of the sidebar, the gear next to the title, **File → Settings...** or `⌘,` / `Ctrl+,`.

Translation does not work and a yellow triangle appears.

Click the **How to fix** warning above the page: almost always the free MyMemory service has used up the day's quota. Add your e-mail, a free DeepL or Microsoft key, or an AI service.

The proofreader underlines nothing.

In Settings → Proofreader and assistant check that LanguageTool is on and that you are online. The free service accepts about 20 checks a minute: after a long paste it may take a few seconds.

Is Gradus really free?

Yes, on all systems, with no subscriptions, ads or limits.

Can I use Gradus on several computers?

Yes: save the `.gradus` file in a synced folder and open it from the other computer. Avoid keeping it open on two computers at the same time.

The page count in the sidebar does not match the PDF.

Before the preview it is an estimate (~ symbol). Open the PDF preview: Gradus measures the real pages and updates the numbers.

The image or source search finds nothing.

You need an internet connection. For images try different words, including in English; recent books may not be in open catalogues yet: fill in the details by hand.

I pasted text and the headings have double numbers ("2.1 2.1 ...").

Remove the typed number: Gradus numbers sections itself.

Word asks to update fields when opening.

Answer **Yes**: Word recalculates the contents and the page numbers of cross-references.

The chosen font does not appear in the Word file on another computer.

System fonts (Times New Roman, Georgia, Palatino, Calibri) are replaced if not installed. The PDF always contains the correct fonts.

I closed without saving.

Reopen Gradus: on the welcome screen you find **Resume** with the automatic backup copy.

My writing time seems low.

That is intentional: Gradus counts only the time you are really writing (keys pressed in the last minute and window in the foreground), not the hours the app is open.

My phone does not read a QR code.

Move the phone closer until the code fills much of the frame and make sure the print is sharp. If the paper is coloured, check that the contrast with the text is good.

A language falls behind or shows a warning.

The translation service has probably reached its daily limit or there is no connection. Gradus retries by itself; you can also add a free DeepL or Microsoft key in **Settings → App**. The circular button in the language bar retries immediately.

I corrected a translation and now it is marked “to review”.

You changed the same paragraph in the reference language after the correction. Reread it: your correction stays until you edit it.

I forgot the unlock code.

The code cannot be recovered. The frozen thesis remains readable, printable and exportable.

On Linux the AppImage does not start.

Make it executable (`chmod +x`) and install `libfuse2`; alternatively use the `.deb` or `.rpm` package.



Gradus — Your path, your thesis.
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