The Dissertation:  
A well-ordered exploration

Dissertation is a very specific way to write what we call a “paper.” In France, this style is used in academics and the professional world alike.

A. The necessities
   a. Personal reaction: Be sincere, though not informal.
   b. Use examples to affirm your point. Using examples limits verbiage, generalities, and banalities.
   c. Be clear and coherent: A good paper should resemble a mathematical proof more than a lyrical flood of words. Be understandable and operate by the Law of Occam’s Razor (the simplest explanation tends to be the best one.)
   d. Outline: Getting your ideas on paper is harder than coming up with them in the first place. In order to convey your ideas effectively to the reader, outline!

B. The schema of a dissertation
   In order to write a dissertation, you need a problem or problématique. Situate that problem within your topic or subject. Do not begin to write without these ideas in mind.

   - General introduction
   - Problématique
   - Body
   - Reiteration of key points
   - Expansion!

C. Introduction
   a. The introduction must rapidly situate and introduce the problem. Cite briefly.
   b. Give an idea of the movement of the paper, but do not announce each step of your work.
   c. Define key words.
   d. Attract the reader!
D. The Body: separated into parts and paragraphs, where each part is a main point in the problem and each paragraph is one idea or one aspect of an idea.

a. The Dialectical Plan
   i. Thesis – often the predominant point of view (the most common analysis)
   ii. Antithesis
   iii. Synthesis: Establish some nuanced truth in between the two arguments or overcome of the initial contradiction by bringing in additional information.

b. “Problem-Cause-Solution” Plan: Introduce and define a problem, pinpoint its causes, and propose a solution.

c. The Inventory Plan: For a rare case when a paper does not present a solution to a problem. Example prompt: What benefits and what pleasures can be taken from reading a good novel? Use precise examples from your personal life.
   i. Separate your argument into parts (in this case, two: benefits and pleasures)
   ii. Order your arguments within each part

d. The Comparative Plan, in which reflection is born of the comparison of different facts or concepts. There are two rules for this type of paper: (1) Each element of comparison constitutes a section or “part” of the paper (2) the opposition posed at the beginning of the paper should follow until the end of the piece.
   i. first element of comparison (one point of view on an issue, for example)
   ii. second element of comparison (an opposing point of view)
   iii. Meditation on the facts presented in the first two parts

e. Explication-Illustration or Formula/commentary Plan
   iv. Explanation of the formula (definition, par ex.)
   v. Commentary on the formula, for example, expansion of a definition, comments on appropriateness

C. The Conclusion: A conclusion must be written in the spirit of synthesis and with logical rigor. Coming to the end of an argument, a conclusion must be concise and strong. If desired, it can situate the results or thesis a more general sense.