ENGL 113: Writing and Communication

Proposals

Proposals are similar to job applications

> You are trying to persuade the audience that your company can do a particular job better than someone else
>
> Or your audience needs a job done and you are the best candidate to do it

Although proposals are written for various reasons—to get a design contract or a construction or manufacturing contract or to sell a product or service—**you will have the option to write one of three kinds of proposals this semester: Business Proposals, Policy Change Proposals, and Event Proposals.**

Before November 19th, email me with your topic, including the type of proposal you will write.

Your assignment is to write a solicited proposal, so your understanding of the audience's needs are clearer than in the case of writing an unsolicited proposal, right?

So, in order to write a successful proposal, you must ask:

> What does my audience need?

The FULL TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS of the topic—your completeness and accuracy—will determine your technical credibility

Explanation of HOW YOUR RESEARCH WILL BENEFIT THE FIELD/ DISCIPLINE = the client needs to know that you understand **where there is a gap in the current research or market.**

> In other words, So what? Who cares?

The following excerpt from Steven King comes in the Preface to Night Shift, King's first collection of short stories. In the excerpt, King suggests that we are all motivated by fear. How does fear underlay your disciplines?

Let's talk, you and I. Let's talk about fear.

The house is empty as I write this; a cold February rain is falling outside. It's night. Sometimes when the wind blows the way it's blowing now, we lose the power. But for now it's on, and so let's talk very honestly about fear. Let's talk very rationally about moving to the rim of madness . . . and perhaps over the edge.

My name is Stephen King. I am a grown man with a wife and three children. I love them, and I believe that the feeling is reciprocated. My job is writing, and it's a job I like very much. The stories—*Carrie, 'Salem's Lot,* and *The Shining*—have been successful enough to allow me to write full-time, which is an agreeable thing to be able to do. At this point in my life I seem to be reasonably healthy. In the last year I have been able to reduce my cigarette habit from the unfiltered brand I had smoked since I was eighteen to a low nicotine and tar brand, and I still hope to be able to quit completely. My family and I live in a pleasant house beside a rela-

tively unpolluted lake in Maine; last fall I awoke one morning and saw a deer standing on the back lawn by the picnic table. We have a good life.

Still . . . let's talk about fear. We won't raise our voices and we won't scream; we'll talk rationally, you and I. We'll talk about the way the good fabric of things sometimes has a way of unraveling with shocking suddenness.

At night, when I go to bed I still am at pains to be sure that my legs are under the blankets after the lights go out. I'm not a child anymore but . . . I don't like to sleep with one leg sticking out. Because if a cool hand ever reached out from under the bed and grasped my ankle, I might scream. Yes, I might scream to wake the dead. That sort of thing doesn't happen, of course, and we all know that. In the stories that follow you will encounter all manner of night creatures; vampires, demon lovers, a thing that lives in the closet, all sorts of other terrors. None of them are real. The thing under my bed waiting to grab my ankle isn't real. I know that, and I also know that if I'm careful to keep my foot under the covers, it will never be able to grab my ankle.

When choosing a topic, consider the risk(s) of not making the proposal?

You build confidence with a DETAILED RESEARCH SCHEDULE that includes the timeline for the writing of the report

Typical Structure

Proposals generally include three main divisions: a *summary*, a *main body*, and *attachments*. The main body focuses on the tree main parts of the proposal: the objectives, the methods, and the cost.

While proposals vary, these are some common elements:

Project Summary

Project Description

Introduction

Rationale and Significance

Plan of the Work

- Scope
- Methods
- Task Breakdown
- Problem Analysis

Facilities and Equipment

Personnel

Budget

Conclusion

Appendices

Your textbook gives more detail about each of these sections, and you should read about them to inform the creation of your proposal assignment.