

Writing to Propose Ideas

Project Overview: Research Proposal

*“People write proposals to explore problems and offer plans for solving those problems”
(Johnson-Sheehan and Paine 247).*

Purpose

In order to build on the research you’ve done for your Annotated Bibliography, you’ll be writing a Research Proposal. The three main things your proposal has to do is 1) Explain the problem, 2) Explain how to address the problem, and 3) Talk about why a solution is important.

The purpose of this proposal is to convince your audience to accept your plan for answering research questions or developing a solution to a specific problem. The key to writing an effective proposal is clearly explaining what the question or problem is and stating how your idea will address that problem through research or action.

Audience

You must effectively persuade your audience to accept your project idea and a plan for moving forward. Consider your audience to be an individual—perhaps your instructor or a group with the authority to approve your proposal. However, your instructor is not the only—or most important—audience for the proposal. You, as the writer of the argument, should be the primary audience for the proposal, which can serve as a guide or map to your Research Report.

What makes an argument persuasive?

- What background does your audience need to know about your topic in order to frame your research question?
- What rhetorical strategies will be most effective for your audience to help them understand and accept your plan?
- What questions about your topic can you anticipate from your audience? How will you begin to address those questions? What about counter-arguments? How will you counter specific oppositions?

Conventions

Research proposals provide a brief overview of a much larger and more complex research project. They are great for planning, for making decisions, and for sharing your ideas with others. They are meant to record your thinking about a project. They should continue to change and grow as your project progresses.

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In general, proposals will feature:

1. A clear working title.
2. A concise description of what you will be researching.
3. Evidence of your preliminary research using high-quality sources identified in your Annotated Bibliography.
4. A thorough description of the research methods you plan to use.
5. No errors in grammar or punctuation.
6. Standard MLA formatting conventions.

Trouble Spots

As you develop your proposal, it may be difficult to present all of the research you have so far completed and hope to complete in a way that persuades your audience to accept your project idea. For a strong, effective proposal, it will be useful to consider the following questions:

When you are beginning to formulate an argument, it is useful to think through the basic elements of the argument before you begin writing.

Do I have a clear *topic*?

- In a word or a phrase, identify the topic of your research.
- What makes this a debatable or multi-sided issue?
- What groups of people would be interested in reading about your topic? In what publications or types of publications could you envision scholarly writings about your question appearing?

What is my *working title*?

- A working title can help both you and your audience succinctly understand the scope of your project.

How can I best provide a *brief overview* of my research? In other words, how are you using your current research?

- In one to three sentences, describe what your research will do. Try to complete this sentence. “My research is about...”
- Incorporate my *preliminary research*? Building off of two or three key sources from your Annotated Bibliography, describe why your topic is important, what research questions you hope to answer, and what you expect to find.

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- How can you most effectively describe your research methods? Describe the methods and strategies you will use to find answers to your research questions.
- What kinds of sources might be most useful to you, and where will you find them?
- What do you expect to find within those sources? What is your overarching thesis to be at this point? Can you articulate your claims in a sentence or two? Note: Good researchers have hypotheses, but they're able to suspend their final judgment until they collect ample information through research.

When writing, keep in mind the rhetorical situation—*what* you are trying to accomplish—and your rhetorical strategy—*how* you plan to accomplish your goal.

Answer these questions in 750-1000 words.

The assignment is due to Google Classroom on Sunday, February 17th @ 11:59 p.m.