

The Research Proposal



The Purpose of the Proposal

- A proposal is written to persuade a specific reader or group of readers to accept a project before the major research is begun or while it is in its early stages. For example, a researcher thinking about writing a book proposes the project to an editor, much as students beginning a research project may be asked to propose the project to their instructor.

In a Research Proposal, you need to convince your reader that...

- ...you have identified a problem or controversy that you believe deserves more exploring
- ...you have a sound approach to researching this problem or controversy, and you are open to shifting your final thesis based on what you learn from your findings
- ...you have both the interest in the problem or controversy *and* are prepared to execute a successful research plan

A Proposal Serves Two Purposes

- First, a proposal can help you more clearly see and shape the purpose and direction of your research.
- Second, a proposal can demonstrate more clearly than your less formal work that you have a viable project, that you are thinking about how you will find your sources, and that you have already thought critically about your topic

A Proposal Should Demonstrate...

...that you understand the claim or claims involved in your topic in relation to the consensus in the field

...that you do not have a definitive thesis already and are open to how the research findings will cultivate your understand of the topic and, thus, determine your thesis

...that you know a decent amount about the topic at this point, but you the research is necessary for a comprehensive understanding of this topic

Proposal Questions

In general, a proposal should answer the following questions and will usually follow this general order:

- 1. What is the problem/controversy?** *Why should we care about it?*
- 2. What is your solution?** *Why should we think this solution will work?*
- 3. How are you going to arrive at this solution?** *Why should we think your approach to this project will be successful?*
- 4. What product will be the outcome?** *Why should we believe you?*
- 5. What resources will be used/needed?** *Where will you go/look for your sources? At this point, which research resources will be the most useful?*

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Remember: The whole point of this proposal assignment is to prepare you for the reading, research, and writing of Essay 2, the argumentative research paper.

For an example of a research proposal, please look at the student example (Research Proposal Example).

Work Cited: The majority of information in this PowerPoint came from chapter four in Linda Bergmann's *Academic Research and Writing*, Boston: Pearson Education, 2010. Print.