

Proposal

Write a formal proposal to me in which you convince me that a significant problem exists for a certain person or group of people, and that your group should be permitted to solve (or reduce) the problem by writing a document for the person or people. You must also show that you have found a client who is willing to work with your group, and who also thinks the document is needed. When writing the proposal, think of me as someone who wants to be sure that your group chooses a project from which you can learn a great deal and on which you can do a good job. While I am willing to consider a wide range of projects, you must persuade me that you have chosen a worthwhile, carefully thought-out project that you are capable of handling well. See syllabus for due dates.

Use the following basic structure for your proposal.

Problem statement

Use one of the three structures we will discuss in class.

Problem

Describe a problem and its significance *for the intended audience* of your document. Include evidence to convince me that the *audience* is facing a pressing problem. It may help to explain why your client needs the document, too, if the client is not the audience.

Proposed solution

Explain how your document will solve the problem for the *audience* and the client. (Be sure to explain who the client is and why they want the document, if you haven't already). Describe your preliminary plans for the document (type of document, content, organization, etc.) and justify your plans based on the *audience's* NAK and the client's needs. Include evidence to convince me that you know what the audience needs.

Work plan

Describe work that must be done in order to complete the project. Identify research questions—about the topic, audience, genre, or other issues—that you need to answer in order to complete the project. Explain how you will find answers to the questions. Establish a schedule that shows specifically when certain activities must be completed (suggested time frame=4 weeks to 6 months). Describe each group member's purpose as it is relative to the project. Convince me that you have thought through the project and can complete it on time.

Qualifications

Describe your qualifications for the project and your access to necessary resources including people to contact for information. Convince me that you are prepared to work on this project.

A key element of proposals is *detail*. A detailed proposal will last 4-5 single spaced pages, not including a title page and appendices. Make sure your proposal includes enough detail in each section to be persuasive. Details are especially useful for demonstrating thought and planning. As you work on your proposal, we will discuss strategies for identifying persuasive goals and selecting details to support those persuasive goals.

Criteria for evaluation

The following factors are crucial for the success of your proposal. All of the factors are important. If you are uncertain about whether your proposal meets these criteria, please seek my advice.

- *Logic*: Is there a clear relationship between the problem and the proposed solution? Does the problem statement present three logical steps that build on each other? Do the first two steps in the problem statement serve as the logic and organization for the problem section?
- *Solution*: Will the planned document, as described in the proposal, meet the needs of the audience? Will it meet the needs of the client?
- *Planning*: Do you have sufficient knowledge of the background of the problem? Do you have a well-thought-out, detailed plan of action for completing the necessary work on time? Do you have the expertise and resources necessary to carry out the project?
- *Persuasion*: Are claims supported by detailed evidence? Do you use appropriate strategies to build your ethos or credibility?