

## Research Topic Proposal

ENG102

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Now that you have completed the brainstorming exercise and had a chance to look for sources at the library, I want you to write a formal proposal explaining your topic, why it is important, and what you want to learn about it.

The goal of the proposal is to clearly lay out, both for me and for you, what your topic is. It gives us a chance to talk about the topic, refine it further, and make sure that it is an issue you want to spend the rest of the semester working on.

It's very likely that you'll be asked to write many proposals in the future—proposals for research topics in other classes, activity or funding proposals for organizations you belong to, proposals to present a paper or poster at an academic or professional conference, and technical or professional proposals for your workplace. Each kind of proposal will vary in expected content, but a few things are common:

- a clear explanation of your purpose/topic
- convincing reasons for why the topic/activity is worthwhile
- details on how you plan to go about achieving your goal (to convince people you can do it—especially important if asking for funding or time).

Further, in nearly every situation a proposal becomes a sort of contract between you and the person/institution you submit it to; if accepted, the reader expects you to deliver on what is promised in the proposal. By the same token, a proposal becomes an important document for you to help stay on track with long projects, providing a record of your plans that you can keep referencing to remind yourself of your goals.

For our class project, I want your proposal to include the following:

1. Your name and a title for the proposal, such as “A Research Proposal for \_\_\_\_\_”
2. Your topic outlined in a brief (no more than 50 words) paragraph; think of this as an abstract, or a one or two sentence overview. In real-world situations, this sort of overview is important to make sure the right person (someone with knowledge about the topic) will be the one who reads your document.
3. A Research Statement (1-2 pages, double-spaced). This portion goes into much more detail about the project, responding to these questions:
  - a. *Why are you interested* in this topic? How does it relate to your selected career field, course of study, or personal interest?
  - b. *What do you know* about this topic already?
  - c. Who are the *stakeholders* in this topic (who else might be affected)?
  - d. What are some possible *audiences*/who else might share an interest in your topic?
  - e. What *kinds of sources* do you anticipate needing in order to adequately address this topic? Where (which databases) and how (what key terms) might you find sources for this topic?

4. *Three preliminary sources* cited in MLA or APA format (see *A Pocket Style Manual* or visit the Purdue OWL online for models) and a *brief indication* (25-50 words) on the “perceived value” of these sources. How relevant is this source to your topic? What kind of source is it? Note that you are not locked into using these sources; rather, I want you to include these three to demonstrate that there are credible, academic sources available. You don’t need to have read these sources in their entirety, but do take time to read the abstract and skim over the article before including it. The purpose for that is to make sure that the kinds of sources available on your topic are the kinds of sources you’d want to spend time reading and which you feel confident that you have enough background knowledge to be able to use effectively. I’ll ask you to tell me more about these sources during our one-on-one conferences.

I’ll meet with each of you individually next week to talk about your topics. **Your proposal must be complete at the time of our conference.** You may bring it in electronically or in print; if electronic, please bring your own laptop or tablet and have the file loaded prior to the start of our meeting.