



ENGL 1033

Assignment 4: Formal Proposal

This assignment requires you to identify a problem, opportunity, or need for which you will offer a solution. Proposals can be an offer to do research, to provide a product or service, or to be given money for various types of projects. Remember that your proposal is a persuasive document; you are trying to convince your audience to endorse your solution. Your goals are to persuade your audience that:

- they have a need
- you understand that need
- you have a plan and are capable of executing it
- you are a professional; they can trust you to get the job done

Proposals are typically divided into three parts: front matter, body, and back matter. See [Formatting Your Proposal](#) for more information on how to organize the proposal.

Front Matter:

Unless your instructor requests that you include a cover letter, the first item in your front matter is a title page in which you provide your name, your addressee (your intended audience), the date, and the title of your proposal. Also, include a brief summary of your proposal. Altogether, the title page should be no longer than one page.

Your instructor may request that you also provide a table of contents in your front matter. The table of contents tells readers what pages the various sections of the proposal appear on.

Body:

The body constitutes the bulk of the proposal and consists of the following sub-sections:

- Executive Summary: Executive summaries provide a brief summary of the proposal and persuade the readers to read the entire proposal. The goals of the executive summary are to show that you understand the readers' needs, to explain the value of your solution, and to argue why you are qualified for the job. Also, briefly describe the **deliverables** of your solution (how the readers will benefit from your solution). The executive summary should be about ten percent of the length of the total proposal (including front matter, body, and back matter).
- Introduction: The introduction identifies the problem you are addressing and *shows* readers that the problem is genuine and relevant to them. Use a combination of quantitative data (including polls, surveys, and other forms of empirical information) and qualitative data (including interviews and anecdotal evidence) to prove your problem exists and your solution is needed.
- Proposed Program: Introduce and describe your solution step-by-step. In this section, include:
 - I. the steps involved in your solution, in chronological order
 - II. your budget and estimated timeline (use visuals such as graphs and charts to supplement your textual description); be as specific as possible with these items, and always overestimate rather than underestimate



- III. how you will recruit staff or volunteers, if applicable
- IV. the deliverables of your solution (how your solution will benefit the readers)
- V. any contingency plans you have in place in case things go wrong, if applicable

- Conclusion: Summarize the proposal's key points and remind the readers of your qualifications. End by once again reminding the readers how your solution will benefit them.

Back Matter:

Items to include in the back matter include:

- appendices, which include supplemental information such as:
 - I. your résumé, curriculum vitae, or other documentation showing your qualifications
 - II. visuals that are too large to put in the body or which require thorough description
- bibliography, which lists your references
- glossary, which defines technical terms or abbreviations that may not be familiar to your readers

General Tips for Writing the Proposal:

- Know your audience. Different audiences will require different levels of specificity, and some audiences will understand technical terms better than others.
- Maintain a formal, professional tone throughout the document. Do not use clichés or colloquialisms.
- Keep visuals aligned with the text that describes them, and label visuals (e.g., “Figure 1”) so that you can refer to them in the text (e.g., “See Figure 1”).
- Give the proposal a “you” focus rather than an “I” focus; focus on explaining how your solution will benefit your *readers* rather than yourself.
- Be specific with your budget and timeline. Also, always overestimate your budget and timeline; it is better to ask for more time and money upfront than to realize halfway through the project that you need more.