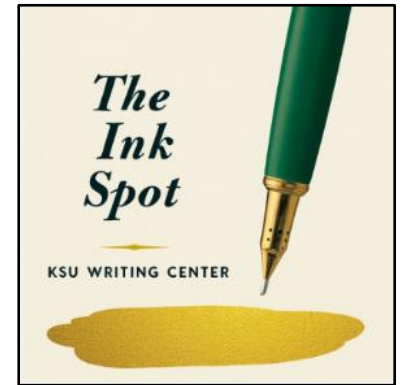




Research Proposals



If it needs approval, whether in college or in your career, you will need to create a proposal to reveal its worth. You have to prove that research has been done, a problem has been identified, and that a response or solution is possible. Thus, think of research proposals in college as your chance to practice an important lifelong skill.

What does a research proposal look like?

A research proposal should reveal that you are focused on a singular topic and have been asking appropriate research questions. It should prove that you care about your topic and that an argument within it is possible. So, how do you do this? While research proposals vary from discipline to discipline, they will usually contain a majority of the same elements:

1. Title or Title Page
2. Brief Summary and Literature Review
3. Identification of Gap and Methods
4. Connections with Research
5. Implications of Your Research
6. Research Schedule *(if requested)*
7. Bibliography *(Works Cited or Reference)*

Crafting the Proposal

0. Preliminary Research and Research Questions

- This proves to you that research is possible. It also gives you the knowledge you need to start creating research questions.
 - What interests me? How can I narrow that down and make it more specific to the topic?
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1. Title or Title Page

- The title should be clear and specific. The title should usually be shorter.
 - If in a science field, the title may be longer if it comes after more rigorous research and the request for the proposal demands that it be very specific.
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2. Brief Summary and Literature Review

- This is where you convince the reader that the problem is significant and worthy of further research. Bring in your research questions and the topic's context.
 - What is the history? What are the main debates and problems within the topic? What makes this important to a modern audience?
 - Do not summarize everything in depth. Create brief summaries and evaluations of your preliminary research and tie it into the context and questions.
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3. Identification of Gap and Methods

- A gap is a portion of the topic with little to no research. Are you challenging something? Bringing in new ideas? Proposing a solution?
- How are you going to do this? What methods of research and what kind of research will help you to create this argument?

Crafting a Proposal

4. Connections with Research

- Connect your methods and your research together. Will they work together well or will they challenge each other?

5. Implications of Your Research

- What is the significance of your gap? How will it influence the topic and the reader?

6. Research Schedule

- If requested, provide a detailed schedule of research and deadlines.

7. Bibliography

- Provide a properly formatted list of citations at the end.
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And *remember*, a research proposal is largely **hypothetical**, so...

- **This is not set in stone or some kind of contract.**
 - It will not trap you into one exact project. In the early stages, people commonly change their minds about big and small details.
 - Just try not to change your mind too far down the line. Focus on making this proposal as interesting to *you* as possible.
- **It is just *proposing* where you can go.**
 - Sometimes it just informs your instructor or employer where you want to go with research. It proves initiative and thoughtful effort.
- **Revision is important!!!**
 - Your argument will change the most in the beginning of the process, so be prepared to revise and edit your proposal multiple times before submitting it for approval.