

Methods of Writing Research Papers

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Lecture Four

Drafting a Research Proposal

A research proposal is presented in one of two forms: (1) a short paragraph to identify the project for yourself and your instructor, or (2) a formal, multipage report that provides background information, your rationale for conducting the study, a review of the literature, your methods, and the conclusions you hope to prove.

a. The Short Proposal

A short proposal identifies five essential ingredients of your work:

- b. The specific topic
- c. The purpose of the paper (to explain, analyze, or argue)
- d. The intended audience (general or specialized)
- e. Your voice as the writer (informer or advocate)
- f. The preliminary thesis statement or opening hypothesis

b. The long Proposal

Some instructors may assign the long proposal, which includes some or all of the following elements:

1. A cover page with the title of the project, your name, and the person or agency to whom you are submitting the proposal.

2. If required, add an abstract that summarizes your project in 50 to 100 words.
3. Include a purpose statement with your rationale for the project. In essence, this is your thesis statement or hypothesis, along with your identification of the audience that your work will address and the role you will play as investigator and advocate.
4. A statement of qualification that explains your experience and, perhaps, the special qualities you bring to the project. Caitlin Kelley included this comment in her proposal.
5. A review of the literature, which surveys the articles and books that you have examined in your preliminary work.
6. A description of your research methods, which is the design of the materials you will need, your timetable, and, where applicable, your budget. These elements are often a part of a scientific study