

# PROPOSAL TIPS & HINTS

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## SECTION I: PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

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**Important note about writing a proposal:** Proposals are informative and persuasive writing because they attempt to educate the reader and to convince that reader to do something (give you money). The goal of the writer is not only to persuade the reader to do what is being requested, but also to make the reader believe that the solution (how you are going to answer your question) is practical and appropriate. The effectiveness of your proposal will depend on your ability to explain the nature, context and scope of your project and how you will achieve your goals.

As you are writing, ask yourself:

- 1) Is this information needed to understand how I will answer my question? If no – take it out!
- 2) Will this plan **ACTUALLY** answer my question (as it is written)? If no – rethink your plan or the wording of your question!

Proposals are required to have the following sections. It is recommended but not required that you follow the listed order. Sometimes a proposal flows better with sections in a different order; this is fine, just be sure that there is a logical flow to your writing. Use section headings to make your proposal easier to read.

REMEMBER: Reviewers have to read a lot of proposals – not just yours. They expect information in particular areas and to follow a set format – make sure information is where they expect to see it. *Make it easy for reviewers to find and understand the information they need.*

Example: Reviewers will expect to see your Discovery Day presentation in the “Anticipated results/Final Products and Dissemination” section. Be sure to put it there. If you put it in Timeline or Project Design – it may get missed and you will lose points.

Your proposal should consist of the following:

1. **Background/Knowledge in the field/Literature review** - Be succinct. This section should provide the information that the reviewer needs to know to understand what and why you are doing this project. Include a discussion of the present understanding and/or state of knowledge concerning the question/problem or a discussion of the context of the scholarly or creative work. This section presents and summarizes the problem you intend to solve. This section should include documentation, references, and a review of the literature that supports the need for your research or creative endeavor. **\*\*For questions regarding works cited, references, or bibliography, please see #8 below.**

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## SECTION IV: EXAMPLES OF TIMELINES

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It is MUCH easier to read a list or table than a paragraph of text. It is STRONGLY recommended that you use one of the following timeline formats for your proposal. The timeline should be a very brief summary of your project design section. If you find yourself writing full sentences in the timeline - STOP - you probably need to move this info to the design section.

Project Timeline:

Throughout project	continue review of current literature, intense background research
July	excavation of site at Habitation Crève Coeur
August – November	analysis of statistical data from the site
October – March	writing and revising of report
January - May	prep for conferences and publications

Project Timeline:

Task description	Project Months													
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
continue review of current literature, intense background research	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
excavation of site at Habitation Crève Coeur				X										
analysis of statistical data from the site					X	X	X	X						
writing and revising of report							X	X	X	X	X	X		
Prep for conferences and publications										X	X	X	X	X