

## Guidelines Proposals

### Your Goal

Your goal is to persuade others that you have a workable solution or plan that solves a problem or meets a need.

“It is the duty of the president to propose, and it is the privilege of the congress to dispose.”

—Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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### 1. Prewrite: (Ideas and Organization)

- To whom are you making this proposal? What are your reader’s needs, attitudes, and concerns in relation to the issue?
- Exactly what are you proposing? Why?
- What outcome do you want?

#### Study the need or problem and possible solutions.

- Research the problem’s background and history.
- Break the problem into parts, noting causes and effects.
- Review any solutions attempted in the past, noting their successes and failures.
- Identify other solutions and choose the best one.

### 2. Draft: (Ideas, Organization, and Voice)

**Opening** Provide context, as well as a summary, if appropriate.

**Middle** Present the problem or need and your solution.

- Explain what the problem is and why it should be corrected.
- Map out the solution and stress its value.

**Closing** Summarize your conclusions and recommendations.

### 3. Revise: (Ideas, Organization, Voice, Words, and Sentences)

- Have you provided all the details that your readers need?
- Does the proposal address alternatives, stress benefits, consider ripple effects (who will be affected and how), and show your ability to implement the solution?
- Is your tone confident and positive, but not aggressive?
- Have you used precise words, easy-to-read sentences, and strong transitions?

### 4. Refine: (Conventions and Design)

- Have you checked grammar, punctuation, and spelling?
- Have you checked document design?

## Organizing Proposals

### Opening

- **Label** your proposal with the following: a title or a subject line that promises productive change, your name, your reader's name, the date, and any reference numbers.
- **Introduce** your proposal by providing background and establishing the theme—the need to be met, the problem to be solved, and the benefits to be gained.
- **Summarize** your proposal if you want to be direct. To be indirect, do not include the summary.

### Middle

- **Define** the problem or need. Explain its importance, limits, causes, effects, history, and connection with larger issues. Review any past attempts to solve the problem, noting their successes and failures.  
*Note:* If the reader is aware of the need or problem, be brief and informative. If the reader is unaware or resistant, build a persuasive case about the problem or need and its importance.
- **List** criteria for a solution. What should a solution accomplish?
- **Compare** alternative solutions. Then promote the best one.
- **Prove** the solution's workability by highlighting the following:
  - outcomes of the solution.
  - requirements (facilities, equipment, material, personnel, and so on).
  - schedules for start-up, stages, finishing dates, and follow-up.
  - cost breakdowns (services, equipment, materials, travel, and so on).
  - methods of monitoring costs and quality.
  - your qualifications for undertaking the task.

### Closing

- **Summarize** the problem or need and alternative solutions.
- **Provide conclusions** about the best solution—results and benefits.
- **Review your recommendations** for implementing the solution.



“Controversial proposals, once accepted, soon become hallowed.”

—Dean Acheson

## Checklist Proposals

Your goal is to persuade others that you have a workable solution or plan that solves a problem or meets a need.

### Ideas 9-16

- \_\_\_ shows a thorough understanding of the problem, alternative solutions, the reader’s needs, and your own resources.
- \_\_\_ where possible, supports its claim by citing the company’s mission, goals, plans, or policies.
- \_\_\_ offers a clear, persuasive line of thinking from beginning to end.
- \_\_\_ contains accurate and realistic details, figures, and estimates.
- \_\_\_ includes supporting graphics such as tables and charts.

### Organization 17-24

- \_\_\_ explains the problem (nature, importance, history, and so on).
- \_\_\_ states the solution, stresses benefits, and shows how this solution addresses the problem better than the alternatives do.
- \_\_\_ presents an implementation plan in terms of time, money, and personnel.
- \_\_\_ includes measures for checking progress and testing the outcome.

### Voice 25-32

- \_\_\_ has a positive and confident but objective tone.
- \_\_\_ shows “you attitude”—careful attention to the reader’s perspective.

### Words 33-40

- \_\_\_ uses language at an appropriate level of formality.
- \_\_\_ uses technical terms carefully, defining any unfamiliar terms.

### Sentences 41-50

- \_\_\_ passes the “read-aloud” test for smoothness and logical transitions.
- \_\_\_ states main points, conclusions, and recommendations in clear sentences.

### Correctness 51-58

- \_\_\_ contains no errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.

### Design 59-70

- \_\_\_ follows the format expected by the company.
- \_\_\_ uses consistent, parallel, informative headings.
- \_\_\_ uses white space, underlining, boldface, and other layout features.

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## Instru

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produce goods  
often need inst  
When these im  
help organizati  
hand, poorly  
customers, exp  
This chap  
Guidelines and  
lists, numbered  
message across.  
areas for spec  
document.