

## Project 1 Proposal

Proposals encourage an audience to take some form of action: authorize a project, support a specific plan for solving a problem, or purchase a service or product. Consequently, their primary purpose is to persuade and they should anticipate and answer questions that the audience might have about the potential problem and proposed solution. As with most student proposals, this proposal should persuade me to approve your project. (HINT: what persuades me is a well thought-out and connected argument.)

Generally, proposals follow a problem/solution structure. The proposal should explain the nature of the problem, recommend a solution to the problem, discuss the resources needed to solve the problem (technologies, skills, money, and/or time), and establish your ability to successfully enact this solution. These basic rhetorical goals can apply to a short memo or letter up to a long report or book-length document.

This proposal for Project 1 should come in the form of a one to two page single-spaced (business) letter that has one paragraph on each of these topics (you may need more to develop the solution section):

- Introduction – Explain the purpose of the proposal and give some background on the situation. Explain why you want to produce the personal, professional, or academic site you chose to pursue. Establish your personal, professional, or academic background that led you to choose this option. This context might include why you took this class or why you came to Mason and enrolled in a particular degree program. It may include external life events or organizations in which you work. You don't need too much here: just enough to set some basic context and introduce the issue.
- Problem – Explain the nature of the problem. Establish the specific consequences of the background events with respect to the reader's concerns. The basic problem in this situation is your need to establish an online identity (personal, academic, professional) to inform or persuade audience \_\_\_\_\_ to do or think \_\_\_\_\_. Explain who your primary audience is, what you want them to do or think, and how achieving this goal constitutes a rhetorical and design problem. This reasoning should be connected to the general goals and situation discussed in the introduction.
- Solution – Establish your solution to the problem. Explain specifically how these goals can be met and the benefits of the plan. Include discussions of your design plans (site design, navigation, page design, typography, image/icon development, color scheme) and content and how these elements will help you achieve your rhetorical goal—establishing a particular identity and solving the problem of connecting with an audience. Explain why your proposed design and content is the best solution to the rhetorical and design problem established above, argue for the benefits of the proposed plan, and show why the reader should accept the plan. Be specific in discussing how elements of your design will establish the proposed identity and have the intended effect on the users.

- Resources – Outline the resources needed to solve the problem. In a larger proposal this would include budget and costs, but for this proposal it should include research needs (methods, processes, rhetorical skills, needed information, further research or learning), technology needs (materials, equipment, and available facilities) and a schedule for completion (establish what you have done so far and what remains to be done and when—be specific). Discuss the feasibility of your project and how it will be implemented.
- Qualifications – Establish your ability to carry out the solution. In this case both rhetorically and technically. What are your academic or workplace qualifications for establishing the particular identity you plan to establish? What are your technical qualifications for carrying out the proposed design?
- Conclusion – Ask the reader to take some specific action. Reaffirm the need for action to solve the problem via the proposed solution. Reassert the logic of your design and its ability to carry out its rhetorical goal. Point out expected results of the project and give your final appeal (i.e., argument) to request my action to approve the project.

Go back to your initial site specification document to get some ideas for starting the proposal, but be sure to more fully elaborate on the brainstorming you did there. Make a **tight, coherent, detailed argument** in support of your project. Convince me that it is theoretically sound and materially achievable for you at this point in the semester.

Remember that proposals are typically formal; generally use concise and clear language (though they may include technical terms if audience appropriate); and often utilize user-friendly formatting (headings, numbering systems, bullets, typographical and spatial variation, graphics, and charts). For example, your proposal might use headings for each of the basic paragraphs, might use bullets in the resources paragraph to itemize needs, or might use a graphic to show site or page design (though this would be less likely in a letter format, it could be added as an appendix).