

Summer 2011

To: English 304 Students  
From: Allison Hitt  
Date: June 2, 2011  
Subject: Collaborative Proposal

For this assignment, you will write a Collaborative Proposal with your group member(s) about a particular topic. Topics should be local and specific (i.e., not drug legalization, the drinking age, or gun control). Consider addressing problems in your workplace, clubs and organizations, major, at WVU, and in Morgantown. Research will also be localized, though you should do research to see how the problem is talked about elsewhere, what solutions others have found, etc.

### **Function of Proposals**

All proposals have two purposes: to make an explicit request and to provide evidence that the request is reasonable and should be granted. Proposals should be succinct and to the point while providing enough detail to be convincing to the audience. The *primary* audience for a proposal is the decision-maker. The *secondary* audience is the person(s) who will carry out the proposal should it be accepted.

Proposals need to answer the following questions:

- What is the problem to be solved? Why is the writer qualified to solve it?
- What is the writer's state of knowledge?
- What resources will be needed? Where will the resources come from?
- What are the practical and theoretical roadblocks and how will they be overcome?
- What has already been accomplished? What still needs to be accomplished?
- How will these tasks be accomplished within the given time constraints?

### **Proposing Your Report Problem**

Your proposal will ask me for permission to proceed on a given topic for your recommendation report. It should take the form of a formal memo and include the following sections:

*Introduction:* Explicitly ask for approval and provide an overview of your main argument.

*Definition of the Problem:* Explain the problem clearly through a well-developed problem statement, which contrasts either an ideal with the current situation or two non-aligned goals. This should highlight the importance of the problem for the report's audience and convince me this is a problem that should be addressed.

*Research Plans:* Detail what you plan to do to research the problem, its conditions, its history, and possible solutions. Include a sense of who the audience for the report will be and what kinds of information they'll need in order to be convinced. Research may involve library and Internet research, and it might include interviews or other primary materials. You must convince me that you know what you'll need to find and where you'll find it.

*Qualifications:* Explain why you're qualified to tackle this research problem. Qualifications might include class work but might also include life or on-the-job experience.

*Timeline:* Break your tasks down into the steps you'll have to take in order to finish the report on time, including those that have already been done. You must convince me that you can do what needs to be done in the time remaining before the report is due to me.

*Conclusion:* Restate your argument for why you should be given permission and formally ask permission to proceed.

NOTE: Remember that you do not need a solution at this time. Your solution to the problem will most likely emerge from the research you will do. Your goal in this proposal is to convince me that you will be able to write a successful report on this topic.

### **Criteria**

Your proposal should fulfill the following criteria:

- **Focus:** Your topic should be local and specific. Likewise, your proposal should be focused. Rather than speaking in abstractions about your topic, include concrete details about the topic and your group's plans.
- **Persuasiveness:** Proposals are meant to persuade. For this proposal, you want to persuade me—the reader and your instructor—that you are capable of adequately and effectively addressing this topic and doing the research for it.
- **Appropriate sections and formatting:** The proposal should be broken into logical, clear sections, and it should follow the generic conventions of a formal memo.
- **Concise style:** Your proposal should be clear and succinct. Be sure to proofread for clarity, grammar, and spelling errors.

Collaborative Proposals are due Thursday, June 9, 2011.