

*Notes to instructors are in red; please delete before sharing with students.  
Assignment updated summer 2025.*

## **Short Assignment 6: Project Proposal**

### **Purpose**

The goal of this assignment is to enhance your ability to propose an idea and outline a plan for your Writing Project 3. In this project, you will develop a well-researched and persuasive argument addressing an issue that impacts the UW-Madison campus or local Madison community, taking into account both community needs and potential solutions. You are expected to clearly explain the issue you intend to explore in Writing Project 3, detail how you plan to conduct your research and analysis, and outline what you anticipate discovering. This assignment will help you ensure that your project is feasible and well-organized.

### **Learning Outcomes**

- To build on research skills and strategies.
- To gain experience with different research genres and audiences/stakeholders.
- To craft claims and reasons for an extended argument
- To learn strategies for critiquing, evaluating, interpreting, and incorporating researched ideas.
- To gain practice in drafting and revising in response to peers and your instructor.
- To learn how to support an informed and credible opinion or point of view.
- To continue to practice planning, drafting, and revision.

### **Assignment Description**

Proposals are a genre of writing that cuts across many academic and professional settings. The ability to propose an idea and articulate what you plan to do is thus an essential skill for any writer. The content and arrangement of a proposal shift depending on its purpose. But, in general, your goal is to explain to your reader (1) what you are going to do, (2) how you are going to do it, and (3) what you think you might find. In this way, your reader is able to see if your project is doable, publishable, or, in many settings, fundable.

For this assignment, you should describe what you anticipate your position and/or plan to argue will be in Writing Project 3 and how you plan to carry out the project. Remember that your writing is usually much stronger when you are working on a topic that genuinely interests you. I am giving you a clear outline below of what you should include for this proposal. Don't include the following as headings in your proposal; use them to guide you as you write.

### *Section 1: Research Question*

Your Research Question should do the following:

- Revise your Writing Project 2 question to be more focused on an issue that affects the UW-Madison campus or local Madison community.
- Describe how you arrived at your question and explain why your question is important to you (i.e., tell the story behind your question).
- Provide some keywords (or phrases) related to your question that you can use as search terms for your research.

### *Section 2: Abstract*

An abstract is a short summary of your project. In many academic and professional fields, you are asked to submit an abstract (to a conference, a publication, a reviewer, etc.) before writing the whole paper. In the abstract, you should move beyond stating the question you will investigate. You must state your argument (or what you think it will be). Focus primarily on your main claim and primary support. Tell the reader your methods for making the argument—what type of research you will do and what kind of evidence you will use. This should be no more than 175 words and should be written in the future tense (“I will,” “I hope,” “I plan,” etc.). *It’s okay if your final paper turns out to be somewhat different from what your abstract proposes.*

### *Section 3: Contribution*

When you submit a project proposal, the most important question to answer can be, “So what?” People want to know why this project matters. In this section, you should briefly explain why this project is important (to you, to someone else, etc.). Also, consider to whom this matters – who is your audience?

## **Details**

- Length: Approximately **2 pages**
- Formatting: Follow the guidelines in the syllabus
- Include your **name** and a **title** for your piece
- Include a **reflection**: At the end of your draft on a new page, include a brief reflection of 1-2 paragraphs that shares your process for writing this piece, who your audience was, what you feel you did well in this draft, what you struggled with, and what you would like feedback about.

## Writing Process Timeline

- Draft and submit your initial assignment by \_\_\_\_.
- Participate in peer workshop on \_\_\_\_\_. (Note to instructors: peer workshop is not included in the model calendar, but feel free to add one in if you like.)
- Submit the final copy (revised using instructor and any additional feedback) in your Final Portfolio by \_\_\_\_\_. (Note to instructors: you can decide if you wish to ask students to revise their short assignments.)

## Evaluation Guidelines

(Note to instructors: you may use these recommended guidelines in your rubric or use it to guide holistic feedback)

- *Development or Evidence:* Is the research question clearly identified and articulated? Does the question emerge from the student's interest in an issue that affects the UW-Madison campus or Madison community? Does the student explain how they arrived at the research question? Is the significance of the question to the student well-articulated? Does the student effectively tell the story behind the question? Are relevant keywords or phrases related to the research question provided? Do the keywords make sense in the context of the research question? Does the abstract provide a concise project summary, including the main claim and primary support? Does the abstract clearly state what the student thinks it will be? Are the methods for making the argument clearly described, including the type of research and evidence to be used?
- *Purpose and Audience:* Does the student explain why the project is important? Is the relevance of the project to the student or others clearly articulated? Does the student address the "so what?" question effectively? Is the potential impact of the project made clear?
- *Arrangement and Organization:* Does the overall organization and arrangement suit the rhetorical situation? Are the concepts well-developed and connected?
- *Style:* Is there clear control and purposeful use of language? Did the writer use variety, repetition, or other strategies to effectively emphasize and communicate ideas? Is the diction appropriate and deliberate?

## Technology and AI Guidelines

(Note to instructors: we recommend engaging students in the process of developing these guidelines, though in the first sequence, you might provide more guidance)

- *You may use technology or tools to aid your learning and writing in the following ways:*
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- *You may not use technology or tools to replace your learning and writing in the following ways:*
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- *You should document any assistance you received in your reflection, whether from tools, technologies, people, or strategies to acknowledge that writing is a process and a complex social activity.*