Proposal Forms Project

Usually, a proposal or grant proposal will have these main sections.

Abstract. A well-defined Problem, a well-thought out Solution, an uplifting, confidence-building Conclusion—these are the three central constants every proposal *always* wants. These first appear, in this order, in a short paragraph called, variously, an "Abstract," an "Executive Summary," sometimes—especially in short proposals—simply an "Introduction."

Proposal Narrative. Sometimes this is the longest part of a proposal, especially in long proposals (over 10 pages), though some agencies don't ask for it at all. It gives details of the problem and puts the problem into context: historical, social, technological—whatever the proposal needs. This is sometimes called "Need for Project" or something similar.

Project Plan. This details your solution and could go by other names such as Project Activities, Key Initiatives, etc.

Credentials. This persuades agencies that you are capable—perhaps *more* capable than any other person or organization—of carrying out the project. However, avoid over-boosting yourself. Also, who has endorsed you?

Partners and/or Resources. Who or what will help you carry out your plan, or who are you in contact with that has done similar work?

Implementation Plan. This is often a chart detailing what will be done, when it will be done, and who will be responsible for it.

Evaluation Plan. What you will measure, and how these will "prove" the success of your project.

Budget. How much $$$ you'll need, and for what.

Conclusion. A proposal usually ends with a paragraph often following the Budget—or whatever more technical parts of the proposal may come last—partly so the proposal doesn't end on strictly technical or monetary terms. It's your chance to inspire and build confidence.

Not every section is needed in every proposal, and usually each "agency" you submit to often has a particular form it wants followed. If so, follow *exactly*. If the agency asks for a budget first—this rarely happens—then put it first, not last. If it wants a 250-word abstract, don't go one word over.

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The "project" part of this online assignment sends you to look at **two** very good proposal forms and to the **sample grants** ending Deborah Koch's book *How To Say It: Grantwriting*. Consider using one of these forms for your project. Adapt as needed, even combine, if needed.

Go **HERE** to see the seven-part form used by North Central College's Social Innovation Challenge.

This form begins with **Problem** definition, then—before moving on the solution—adds a section on the **Person**, asking why you are particularly qualified to tackle the problem.

Solution comes next, and here the "Solution" is divided into three parts, asking: What is your solution? 2) Is it innovative? 3) How do you know it will work?

Impact comes next. That's often another word for an uplifting **Conclusion**.

After this Conclusion comes the business end: The **Money**, your budget.

Go **HERE** to a post about a masters thesis inspired by the book *Foods Not Lawns*, a thesis which started as a grant proposal written in Professional and Grant Writing. It won $10,600 to start a community garden. The post contains a link to the grant proposal itself. Take note of my "Note," and also, more importantly, how similar the form is to the form above. Unlike above, this form contains tables specifying implementation and evaluation.
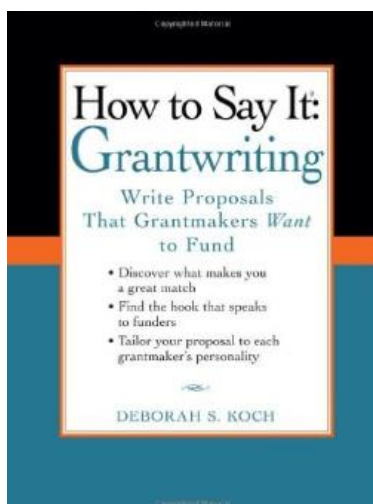
Deborah Koch's book ends with samples of grant proposals, beginning with a sample **Letter of Inquiry**. Notice how the major sections once again nearly mirror the sections in the proposals above. They're basically just in a different order.

Sample two is a **Two-Page Proposal**.

Sample three is a **Twenty-Page Proposal Narrative**.

Please look over these three samples, then jot down brief answers to the following questions. I'll collect these at the end of class. It should take you about a page to do this.

<u>Letter of Inquiry</u>

1) In a letter it could be ok to start with credentials first. What parts of the "Credentials" section could be combined with the opening to make the opening be shorter *and* better?

2) What would you label the section containing the materials you leave in "Credentials"?

<u>Two-Page Proposal</u>

3) The "Introduction" is, essentially, an Executive Summary defining Problem-Solution-Conclusion. It's ok. How could it be made better? Note that the "Need for the Project" details the problem, so perhaps some details in the "Introduction" could be shifted down to this "Need" section.

<u>Twenty-Page Proposal Narrative</u>

4) An asterisk takes you to a note saying the narrative was accompanied by several attachments, including an abstract. Write that abstract, trying to keep it to the "classic" 5-sentence structure we have worked on all term.