



English Academic Writing for Graduate Students

东南大学外国语学院 制作



Unit Two

Research Proposal

Unit Two

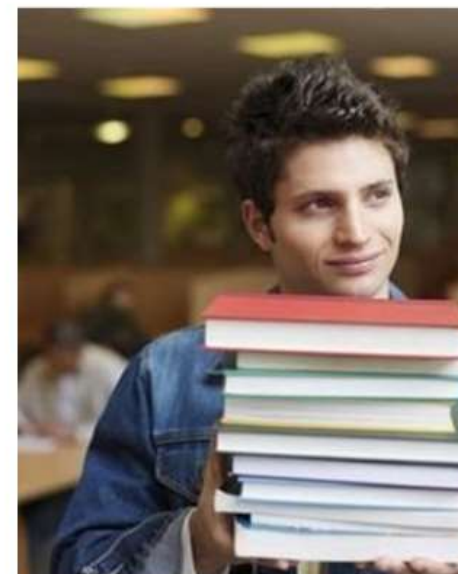
Learning Objectives

- To understand the **importance** and major **components** of a research proposal;
- To become aware of the use of **personal pronouns** and **nominalization** in academic writing;
- To initiate your own research;
- To learn to write a research proposal.

Unit Two

Contents:

- I. Pre-test
- II. Warm-up
- III. Sample Reading
- IV. Language Focus
 - Personal Pronouns
 - Nominalization
- V. Academic Writing Skills
 - Selecting a Topic
 - Formulating the Focus
 - Establishing a Working Title



Unit Two

I. Pre-test

Did you read “Writing a Research Proposal”
(pp. 18 -24) before class?

填空题 2.5分

Directions: Choose the appropriate words and fill in the blanks.

A research proposal is a(n) [填空1] of your proposed project, whose [填空2] is to present and [填空3] your research idea and explain the [填空4] ways in which you think that this research should be [填空5] .

abstract show worked academic aim
way outline justify practical implemented

单选题 1.5分

1. In which area could you develop the subjects that can reach into multiple disciplines?

- ☐ A Area of specialization
- ☒ B Comprehensive literature review
- ☐ C Focused literature review
- ☐ D General research concept

单选题 1.5分

2. Which one in the following should **NOT** be included in the literature review of your research proposal?

- ☐ A The discussion of the texts that you believe are important to your project.
- ☐ B The understanding of the research issues.
- ☒ C The introduction to the approach(es) you will use to achieve your research results in chronological order.
- ☐ D The existing gap that your research intends to fill.

多选题 1.5分

3. What should you pay your attention to when choosing a working title?

- ☒ A The appropriate size.
- ☒ B Available resources.
- ☒ C Including the important keywords.
- ☒ D Indicating the intended approaches.

多选题 1.5分

4. What are crucial in a well-organized methodology section of your research proposal?

- ☐ A The general approaches adopted in the research field.
- ☒ B The types of resources consulted.
- ☒ C The methods for collecting and analyzing data.
- ☒ D The reasons for the chosen methods over other existing approaches.

多选题 1.5分

5. How would you do to highlight the quality of your research in the conclusion of your research proposal?

- ☒ A Indicate the original contribution that it may make.
- ☐ B Present the research findings.
- ☒ C Suggest how it may fill in gaps in the existing research.
- ☒ D Show how it may extend the understanding of particular topics.

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II. Warm-up

- What is your purpose of initiating an academic research?
- Why do you need to write a research proposal?
- How do you initiate your research?
- How do you choose a topic?
- Do you often encounter the first and second personal pronouns in academic writing? And why?

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III. Sample Reading

1. Group task

Directions: Summarize the components of a research proposal based on the text in a few keywords and fill in the following table.

Components	Keywords
Part 1: A Working Title	clear, appropriate in size, achievable...

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III. Sample Reading

1. Summarize the components of a research proposal based on the text in a few keywords and fill in the following table.

Components	Keywords
Part1: A Working Title	clear, appropriate in size, achievable...
Part 2: Overview of the Research	brief, specific, a solid and convincing framework
Part 3: Review of Literature	critical, the most important texts, research issues, existing gap
Part 4: Research Methodology	hugely important, specific techniques, types of resources consulted, ...
Part 5: Facilities Required	the list and description of the available facilities, an alternative prepared
Part 6: Conclusion	an indication of the original contribution, the quality of your ideas
Part 7: List of Key References	the most recent texts and resources, a particular standard formatting style

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III. Sample Reading

2. Read the following pairs of topics and decide which is more suitable for a short-term research. The first one is given as an example.

No.	Topics	Suitable or not
1.	a. In what way are graduate students of Southeast University (dis)satisfied with their life?	✓
	b. Students' college life	
2.	a. Job prospect of graduates of Masters of Science at SEU.	✓
	b. An employment review	
3.	a. India in the age of the Moguls	
	b. Royal monuments of India during the age of the Moguls	✓
4.	a. Classification of anxiety	
	b. Anxiety type among the SEU graduates	✓
5.	a. English word learning	
	b. Needs analysis of English word learning in SEU graduates	✓
6.	a. Faculty bilingualism	
	b. Is personal success of SEU faculty members correlated with bilingualism?	✓
7.	a. Is there an environmental impact on cities in South America during holidays?	
	b. Is the relative volume of rubbish produced during carnival in Buenos Aires related to the economic revenue generated compared with "normal" weekends?	✓
8.	Is there an increase in waterborne disease in the 3 days following summer holidays compared with the three days following "normal" days in Caracas?	✓
	Is the water quality of South American cities with a large population worse on Christmas day compared with "normal" days?	

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III. Sample Reading

3. Decide if the following questions are appropriate for research topics. Why or why not? And how to improve them if necessary?

- ✓ 1) How many cars are there visiting the Desert Vista Mall?

It's too small and too trivial. You know how to answer this question. You know which mall to visit and what to do. The problem with this question is that it does not address what is important in the literature. This question could be important for the transportation planning literature however and could be rephrased to reflect that. The question is improved by relating it to weekend or weekday traffic or which mall entrance has more or less traffic.



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2) How do we improve reading in elementary schools?

It's too large and not doable. This question ties clearly into the research area of elementary school success by researching reading in general, but it lacks any link to the research methods. The question could be improved by asking how different intervention programs help struggling students or how curricula at charter schools differ from public schools.

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3) Can remote sensing be used to detect impervious surfaces?

It can be answered yes or no (while some yes-or-no questions are actually okay, they need to be testing something specific). This is a weak yes-or-no question. There is a link to both the literature review (the need to detect impervious surfaces) and the approach (remote sensing), but both pieces lack specificity. You can improve the question by adding details to both:

Can Markov random fields improve classification of impervious surfaces in Quickbird imagery compared to maximum likelihood classifiers in desert cities?

This is an example of a strong yes-or-no question. On the literature side it suggests a history of detecting impervious surfaces with maximum-likelihood classification approaches. On the methods side, it suggests the approach will use Markov random fields methods in an unspecified desert city.

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IV. Language Focus

A. Personal pronouns

- First person pronouns

- Establishing author identity by using it and strengthening impersonal tone by removing it.

- Second person pronouns

- Seldom used unless you give instructions.

- Third person pronouns

- Sounds more objective and convincing.

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Tasks

1. Rewrite the following sentences to make them more academic by avoiding first and second person pronouns.

- 1) I think that the methodology section is a hugely important part of your research proposal.
 - The methodology section is of great importance for the research proposal.
- 2) When you review literature, you should be aware that you need to identify existing gaps that your research intends to fill.
 - Existing gaps should be identified that the present research intends to fill in the literature review.
- 3) I chose this method because it was less complex.
 - This method was chosen for its simplicity.

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✓ 4) My reading has shown that there are several reasons why plants are dispersed by ants.

- According to the literature reviewed, there are several reasons why plants are dispersed by ants.

5) The review of recent related literature could help you discover the latest facilities that are more efficient than earlier existing ones in carrying out your work.

- In the review of the recent literature, latest facilities could be found which are more efficient than earlier existing ones in the current study.

✓ 6) I also found that the results of this study concurred with Berg's (1975) hypothesis that seeds are protected from fire through their burial in ants nests.

- The results of this study concurred with Berg's (1975) hypothesis that seeds are protected from fire through their burial in ants nests.

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2. Rewrite the following paragraphs to make them more academic by avoiding first and second person pronouns.

The present study is to investigate the impact of two simple actions aimed at getting more female employees to use the stairs at a five floor worksite. The first step was that a health sign was put up that linked stair use to health and fitness. And the second step was that the worksite doctor sent out an E-mail and pointed out the positive effects on general fitness. The study was followed up in four states: a baseline week, the week after the sign, the week after the email and then 3 weeks after that.

Results showed that stair use went up dramatically in a week after the sign, from a baseline of 69% to 77%, and then up again to 89% after the E-mail. Unfortunately, 4 weeks after the E-mail was sent out, stair use declined to 67% . these simple actions were supposed to lead to more stair use but the positive effect vanished after a month. So it's really difficult to make any recommendations based on the evidence.

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IV. Language Focus

B. Nominalization

When you turn a verb or an adjective into a noun, you nominalize it, creating a nominalization.

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Tasks

1. Write down the noun form of the words in the following table.

How?

- Write a simple sentence
- Choose an appropriate ending to create a nominalized form from the main verb or adjective.
- Add a second verb
- Additional information

Words	Noun Forms
special	specialization
describe	description
specific	specificity
assume	assumption
efficient	efficiency
liable	liability
duplicate	duplication
extensive	extensiveness

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2. Rewrite the following sentences to make them more academic by using nominalization.

1) Many children experience worries when they go to school for the first time.
The experience of worries with respect to being at school for the first time is common for children.

✓ 2) Crime was increasing rapidly and the police were becoming concerned.
The police were becoming concerned **about** the rapid increase **in** crime.
The rapid increase in crime was causing concern among the police.

3) Elephants argue over small concerns, just like humans.
Arguments over small concerns are something elephants have, as well as humans.

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4) We need to know which parts of our library are being used most extensively so that we can project what resources are most needed.
It must be found out which parts of the library are in most extensive use so that it can be determined what resources are most in need.

✓ 5) I know English well. I worked for three years in a factory in Shanghai. I think I am good enough for the job.
Both my proficiency in English and my three-year work experience in a factory in Shanghai qualify me for the job.

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3. Rewrite the following paragraph to make it more academic by using nominalization.

The inequity in the distribution of wealth in Australia is yet another indicator of Australia's lack of egalitarianism. In 1985, 20% of the Australian population owned 72.2% of the wealth with the top 50% owning 92.1% (Raskall, 1988: 287:). Such a significant skew in the distribution of wealth indicates that, at least in terms of economics, there is an established class system in Australia. McGregor (1988) argues that Australian society can be categorised into three levels: the Upper; Middle and Working classes. In addition, it has been shown that most Australians continue to remain in the class into which they were born (McGregor, 1988: 156) despite arguments about the ease of social mobility in Australian society (Fitzpatrick, 1994). The issue of class and its inherent inequity, however, is further compounded by factors such as race and gender within and across these class divisions.

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V. Academic Writing Skills

- A. Selecting a topic
- B. Formulating the focus
- C. Establishing a working title

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V. Academic Writing Skills

A. Selecting a topic

Select a topic you really like, are curious about, or are an expert on.

Choose three topics given in the textbook and discuss their possibilities as subjects for your group project with your teammates. If you find none of the following interesting, you can propose your own.

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V. Academic Writing Skills

B. Formulating the Focus

The generalized idea you select as a research topic should be narrowed down and developed to a specifically defined written document and oral presentation.

Narrow down the three topics that you are most interested in by limiting them to some aspects, e.g., to certain population, theoretical foundation and methodology.

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V. Academic Writing Skills

C. Establishing a working title

The following is Eric's research topic. Fill in the blanks to show a possible process of refinement of his working title.

- Explaining vulnerability
- Explaining vulnerability of adolescent girls
- Explaining vulnerability of adolescent girls in North America
- Explaining vulnerability of adolescent girls in North America to violence
- Explaining vulnerability of adolescent girls in North America to violence through empirical field work

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To do list



The 9th Week



For Everyone

1

Exercises of Unit 2 (Do it Yourself)

2

Sample Reading of Unit 3 (pp. 39 - 41)

For Each Group

3

Research Outline of the term paper

4

Preparation for the class sharing (5 mins.)



Thanks

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