

## **Preparation of Research Report**

### **Research Report**

*A report is simply a statement or description of things that have already occurred.* It is concise, clear communication of the important findings of the research work. Reports communicate information which has been compiled as a result of research and analysis of data and of issues. Reports focus on transmitting information with a clear purpose, to a specific audience. Good reports are documents that are accurate, objective and complete. They should be well-written, clearly structured and expressed in a way that holds the reader's attention and meets their expectations.

A research report has a special feature in that it conveys information to the evaluator about the entire activities you had undertaken during the research process. It is the only truly effective way in which you can communicate with your examiners or evaluators about the interesting findings of your work and the new knowledge you have generated.

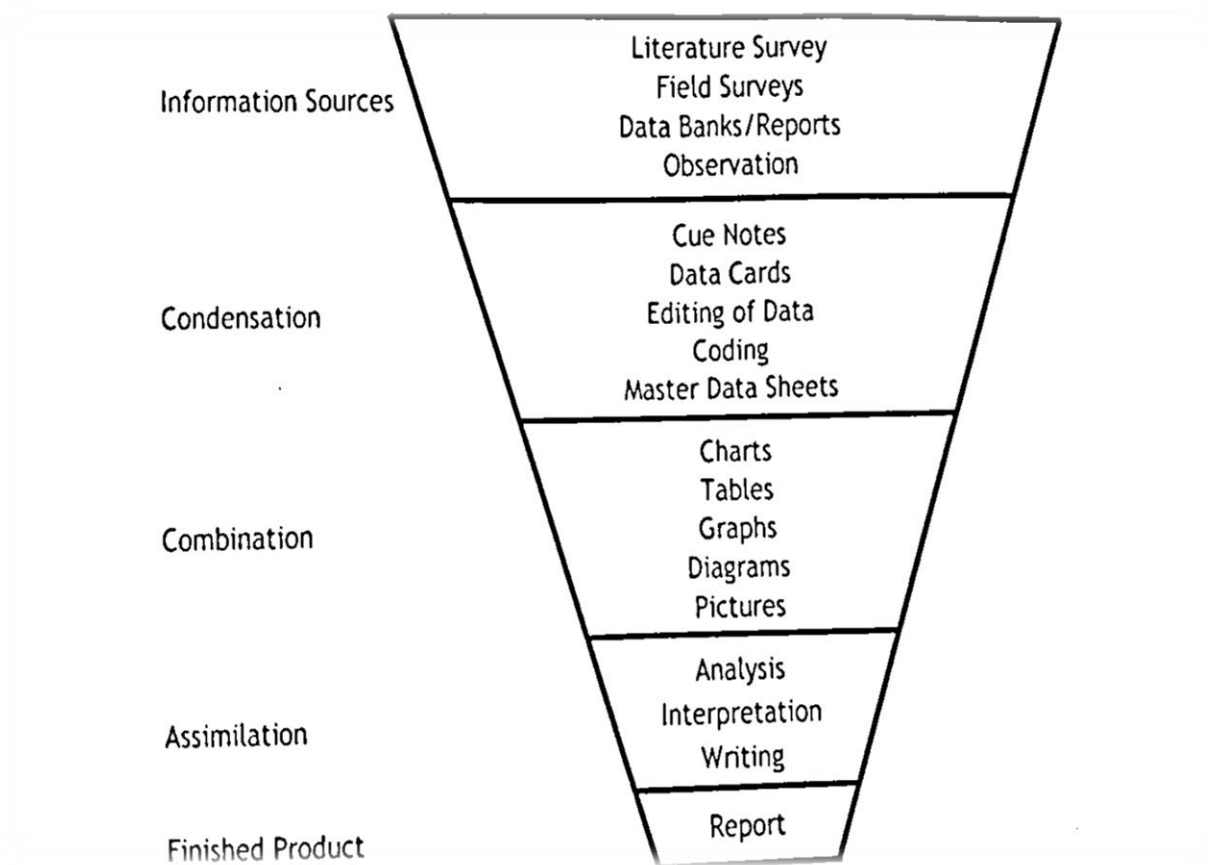
### **Purpose and Importance of Research Reports**

- It is a means whereby the data, analysis and conclusions are placed in an organized form. These information can be used both for academic and application purposes.
- Your research work will be judged mainly by the quality of the report. The examining committee may not see your effort while at field. Your research report is the "only tangible product" of hundreds of hours of work. Therefore, you should show your performance, skills, and thoughts in your report, as these are vital to its assessment and grading.
- The effectiveness of the report may be judged by its use. The organizations, professors, researchers and students are using good reports for different purposes. Report writing may benefit you in any of the following ways, although the relative importance of each will change as the program of work progresses:
  - To see whether you are on target with your work, so that any problems can be spotted in time to be attended to.
  - To provide an opportunity for you to reflect on progress, consolidate arguments and identify any gaps in knowledge, data or methodology.
  - To help you to develop an appreciation of standards and hence to learn to monitor your own progress.
  - To provide practice in academic report writing and academic discourse, so that any additional training which may be necessary in this report can be supplied at an early stage.

- To form a basis, in due course, for your project work and possibly a journal article.

### Research Report Process

There are five steps in the research reporting process. At the top, we have raw data collected from different sources. The data is then passed through different stages of compression. Given figure highlights this report process.



### Types of Research Reports

#### i) Descriptive Reports

Descriptive reports are description of facts, trends or opinions gathered by you in course of your investigation. The presentation and analysis of facts in an organized way may be of real value in properly understanding the situation. These reports indicate the current situation and the nature of the problems facing the organization under study and also indicate the reforms required to overcome the problems.

## **ii) Analytical Reports**

Analytical reports go one step further than descriptive reports. These reports, in addition to presenting facts and statistics, interpret this information in relation to the problem under consideration. Focused on a single or limited area of the problem, these reports follow the process of scientific investigation and reporting. These reports also recommend the actions to be taken for improvements in the situation. You may choose any one of these types of reports. The choice of the types would depend on the nature of your investigation..

## **Procedures for Report Writing**

There are no set rules for writing a research report. A procedure that works well for one person may not work so well for another.

### **Analyze the Task**

You may find the following questions useful when analyzing the task:

- I. What is the purpose of the report?
- II. What should I look up?
- III. Who will read my report?
- IV. What is the word limit?
- V. What is the expected format of the report?

### **Prepare Outline**

In view of your task analysis and the data that you have collected, you can draw an outline of reporting prior to actually starting the write up. An outline is a roadmap to keep you from getting lost when you start to write. This will help you in arranging ideas in a better way. This will also enable you to see broadly which information you want to communicate and how the various points are related to one another. Thus, for effective report writing, it is essential to plan its contents well.

### **Plan Your Time**

The campus/college decides the date of report submission. Therefore, you may not have enough time to work at ease. As you have to meet the time schedule, it is always better for you to plan the available time accordingly. Delays in submission of the research report may cause problems for the student as well as the campus/college.

## **Arrange Data**

You may have collected the data from different sources. The raw data need to be processed and tabulated first. After some editing work is done, the data would be somewhat revealing. You then have to arrange the data in some sequential order for meaningful presentation. The better you organize and arrange the data, the better the data will be revealing.

## **Start Writing**

In writing, the beginning is often difficult. You may begin with the introduction and proceed through to the conclusion. But it is always better to start writing the sections, which appear to be especially easy. This would increase the enthusiasm for the task and enhance your level of confidence.

## **Prepare the First Draft**

You should never expect to produce the excellent report in the first attempt. This may not even be possible for experienced writers. Therefore, it is better to prepare the draft first. Then you can rewrite where necessary.

## **Put the Report aside for a Day or Two**

After preparing the first draft, you can keep the report aside for a day or two and can do some other work. Forgetting about the report for a day or two can be very beneficial. Then you review the report afresh, almost as objectively as another person. If you find weaknesses, you can remove or correct them.

## **Review and Rewrite**

In any report, there is always some scope for improvement. You must review your work in terms of the format and style of reporting. You must ensure that you have followed the format and style prescribed by your campus/college. You should also review your work to identify any errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, etc. Revision or editing is not the same as re-writing the whole thing from scratch. What you are doing is taking a close and careful look at each word, sentence, and paragraph to make sure you have made the best choices.

## **Style of Report Writing**

### **Write Clearly**

The sentence must be as simple as possible. Two or three relatively simple sentences may convey an idea more clearly than one complicated sentence. Similarly, you should not write long paragraphs. You should divide the material into separate paragraphs and use sub-headings, if necessary, to highlight important separate points. The words used must express precisely what you want to say. Finally, you must make sure that the report has uniform style and format.

### **Adhere to the Study Objectives**

You should focus on the research problem. The main purpose of the research investigation is to answer the questions that derive from the statement of objectives. The findings or a simple piece of writing without reference to the objective may be a futile exercise.

### **Be Careful of Terminology, Grammar and Spelling**

The fundamental medium of communicating one's findings is words. Therefore, you should give adequate attention to the correct use of grammar and to the correct spellings of all word. Similarly, appropriate punctuation marks must also be used according to the standard rules and not arbitrarily.

### **Be Selective**

Research reports cannot include everything known on the given subject. If an attempt is made to include too much, there is always danger that the important points will be lost in the detail. Unnecessary accumulation of materials may distort the focus. Hence, you should make good judgment as to what materials to include in the report and what to exclude.

### **Be Objective**

Objectivity is an important determinant of the quality of a research report. Hence, objectivity should be maintained in your research methods and interpretations. You must at all times retain your objectivity. In other words, facts should determine conclusions. Objectivity is essential because it is necessary that others be able to understand and replicate a finding before it is considered dependable. Hence, extra caution should be taken to keep the research reporting process bias-free.

### **Draw Conclusions**

Students often confuse conclusions with research findings. Findings state facts. Conclusions represent inferences drawn from the findings. Findings are just like threads in a handloom. These threads need to be woven, intermixed and converted into a finished product called conclusion..

## **Conventions of Academic Writing**

### **Make Direct and Positive Sentences**

You should not use unessential words and phrases. You should avoid unnecessarily long, technical, or unusual words or phrases. Thus, well-constructed sentences are a mark of skill in writing. In writing a report, you should write naturally and directly using familiar words, short sentences with simple constructions.

### **Presentation**

Charts, sections, sub-sections, tables etc. should be labeled adequately. The system of headings and subheadings should be kept simple. The report must be a coherent whole; it must be a tightly woven fabric of facts and ideas - of sections, subsections, paragraphs and sentences. The sequence of the sections and subsections should be logical and clear. The introduction, data analysis and findings are to be in the past tense; conclusion in the tense; and recommendations in the future tense.

### **Use of the First Person**

The report is to be written in the third person. The pronouns such as I, my, mine, our, ours, We, us and me should be eliminated from the report. If required to refer to yourself, you use the Words "the writer" or "the investigator".

### **Use Gender-neutral Language**

When writing a research report, it is very important to select terminology which treats both genders equally. You should not make assumptions about one gender as opposed to the other. When reporting empirical data in a project work, however, there may often be instances where it is necessary to refer to the gender of a respondent. In such instances, the use of the relevant pronoun, he or she, may be appropriate and even necessary for the reporting of the research.

### **Avoid Emotional Terms**

Instead of writing "Sales increased tremendously", "The increase was fantastic" or "The amazing increase was attributed to... ", simply state the percentage of increase in sales. By so doing, you are neither passing judgment nor trying to make the reader pass judgment.

### **Label Opinions**

Generally, facts are strongly preferred over opinions. Sometimes, however, opinions add conviction. The opinions of specialists may be available when facts from research are not available. When presenting opinions, you can reveal the background and identity of the person presenting the opinion. Sometimes, data are such that no solid conclusion can be drawn, or a variety of explanations could exist. In such cases, opinions can strongly substantiate your explanations and conclusions.

### **Use of Notes and Footnotes**

It is sometimes necessary to include in a project report additional material which it is felt to be inappropriate to place in the main text. This kind of material may be information which is supplementary to the principal arguments of the text. Such material may be included in footnotes at the bottom of the relevant page, or in notes at the end of each chapter.

### **Non-English Terms and Expressions**

Non-English terms are sometimes used in project research reports. The terms which are used regularly in English should not be italicized. However, an expression such as *chakka jam* would probably be italicized. When using an expression from another language, it is worth considering whether it is likely to be understood by most readers.

### **English and American Spellings**

The issue which occurs most commonly in academic writing is the selection of the form of verbs which can end in either 'ise' or 'ize'. In English academic writing, the latter form is the norm. Examples of such regularly used words in research include hypothesize, synthesize, and socialize. However, both these formats are equally acceptable. You should use one spelling format consistently.

### **Abbreviations**

Abbreviations should be used sparingly. When inserted in the text to any great extent, they have the effect of breaking up the text, and making it more difficult to read. The reader may forget the meaning of some of the abbreviations and need to turn back regularly to consult the glossary. When the abbreviation is used for the first time, then the full form of the term should be given first, followed by the abbreviation in brackets afterwards. From that point onwards, the abbreviation may be used on its own.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

As far as possible, you should try to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. If the research involves any type of case study, then it is possible to use fictional names. The main advantage in this is that it gives the report an air of reality.

### **Consistency**

While writing, consistency in the spellings, abbreviations, style, etc. should be maintained. It is therefore to make a choice of format, and then to abide by that choice throughout the report. Even slight variations in practice, can be an irritant for the evaluators of your thesis.

## **Typing the Research Report**

### **Paper**

For the purpose of typing white Xerox paper may be used. The size of the paper should be 8.6 by 11 inches. Only one side of the paper is to be used.

### **Chapter Page**

The chapter number is centered about two inches from the top of the page. Following to spaces below should be the title of the chapter in capital letters. The first line of the text should begin four spaces below that title.

### **Margins**

Margins indicate the boundaries of the text. APA specifies 1-inch margins all around (top, bottom, left, and right).

### **Spacing**

The text of the report should be double-spaced. Indented, quotations and footnotes should be single-spaced. Same style and size of font should be used throughout the report.

### **Page Number**

Page number should come at the top right hand corner of the page, one inch from the top edge and one inch from the right-hand edge of the page. The first line of the text should be two spaces below the page number.

### **Pagination**

Pages should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals from the first page of the text to the end of the manuscript (including the appendices). The pages in the introductory sections (preface, table of contents etc.) should be numbered with small Roman numerals i, ii, iii, iv, v, etc., one inch from the bottom of the page. All page numbers should stand alone without periods, hyphens or dashes.

### **Proofreading**

The manuscript should be read critically, searching for inaccurate statements, wrong entries' omissions and inconsistencies. After verifying and locating errors in quotations, footnotes, tables, figures, paragraphing, sentence structure, headings, spellings, style, bibliography, mark the copy to provide the typist with necessary directions for providing a satisfactory transcript.



## LAYOUT OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

Anybody, who is reading the research report, must necessarily be conveyed enough about the study so that he can place it in its general scientific context, judge the adequacy of its methods and thus form an opinion of how seriously the findings are to be taken. For this purpose there is the need of proper layout of the report means as to what the research report should contain. A comprehensive layout of the research report should comprise (a) preliminary pages; (b) main text; and (c) the end matter.

### (a) Preliminary Pages

In its preliminary pages the report should carry a title and date, followed by acknowledgements in the form of 'preface' or 'foreword'. Then there should be a table of contents followed by List of tables and illustrations.

### (b) Main Text

The main text provides the complete outline of the research report along with all details. Title of the research study is repeated at the top of the first page of the main text and then follows the other details on pages numbered consecutively, beginning with the second page. Each main section of the report should begin on a new page. The main text of the report should have the following sections: (i) Introduction; (ii) Statement of findings and recommendations; (iii) The results; (iv) The implications drawn from the results; and (v) The summary.

#### (i) *Introduction*

The purpose of introduction is to introduce the research project to the readers. It should contain a clear statement of the objectives of research i.e., enough background should be given to make clear to the reader why the problem was considered worth investigating. A brief summary of other relevant research may also be stated so that the present study can be seen in that context. The hypotheses of study, if any, and the definitions of the major concepts employed in the study should be explicitly stated in the introduction of the report.

The methodology adopted in conducting the study must be fully explained. The scientific reader would like to know in detail about such things: How was the study carried out? What was its basic design? If the study was an experimental one, then what were the experimental manipulations? If the data were collected by means of questionnaires or interviews, then exactly what questions were asked (The questionnaire or interview schedule is usually given in an appendix). If measurements were based on observation, then what instructions were given to the observers? Regarding the sample used in the study the reader should be told:

Who were the subjects? How many were there? How were they selected? All these questions are crucial for estimating the probable limits of generalizability of the findings.

The statistical analysis adopted must also be clearly stated. In addition to all this, the scope of the study should be stated and the boundary lines be demarcated. The various limitations, under which the research project was completed, must also be narrated.

### ***(ii) Statement of findings and recommendations***

After introduction, the research report must contain a statement of findings and recommendations in non-technical language so that it can be easily understood by all concerned. If the findings happen to be extensive, at this point they should be put in the summarized form.

### ***(iii) Results***

A detailed presentation of the findings of the study, with supporting data in the form of tables and charts together with a validation of results, is the next step in writing the main text of the report. This generally comprises the main body of the report, extending over several chapters. The result section of the report should contain statistical summaries and reductions of the data rather than the raw data. All the results should be presented in logical sequence and splitted into readily identifiable sections. All relevant results must find a place in the report. But how one is to decide about what is relevant is the basic question. Quite often guidance comes primarily from the research problem and from the hypotheses if any, with which the study was concerned. But ultimately the researcher must rely on his own judgement in deciding the outline of his report.

***(iv) Implications of the results*** Toward the end of the main text, the researcher should again put down the results of his research clearly and precisely. He should, state the implications that flow from the results of the study, for the general reader is interested in the implications for understanding the human behaviour. Such implications may have three aspects as stated below:

- (a) A statement of the inferences drawn from the present study which may be expected to apply in similar circumstances.
- (b) The conditions of the present study which may limit the extent of legitimate generalizations of the inferences drawn from the study.
- (c) The relevant questions that still remain unanswered or new questions raised by the study along with suggestions for the kind of research that would provide answers for them.

It is considered a good practice to finish the report with a short conclusion which summarises and recapitulates the main points of the study. The conclusion drawn from the study should be

clearly related to the hypotheses that were stated in the introductory section. At the same time, a forecast of the probable future of the subject and an indication of the kind of research which needs to be done in that particular field is useful and desirable.

(v) **Summary:** It has become customary to conclude the research report with a very brief summary, resting in brief the research problem, the methodology, the major findings and the major conclusions drawn from the research results.

### **(c) End Matter**

At the end of the report, appendices should be enlisted in respect of all technical data such as questionnaires, sample information, mathematical derivations and the like ones. Bibliography of sources consulted should also be given. Index (an alphabetical listing of names, places and topics along with the numbers of the pages in a book or report on which they are mentioned or discussed) should invariably be given at the end of the report. The value of index lies in the fact that it works as a guide to the reader for the contents in the report.

## **Research Proposal**

In a research proposal, the goal is to present the author's plan for the research they intend to conduct. In some cases, part of this goal is to secure funding for said research. In other words it is approved by the author's supervisor or department so they can move forward with it. In some cases, a research proposal is a required part of a graduate school application. In every one of these circumstances, research proposals follow the same structure.

In a research proposal, the author demonstrates how and why their research is relevant to their field. They demonstrate that the work is necessary for the following:

- Filling a gap in the existing body of research on their subject
- Underscoring existing research on their subject, and/or
- Adding new, original knowledge to the academic community's existing understanding of their subject

A research proposal also demonstrates that the author is capable of conducting this research and contributing to the current state of their field in a meaningful way. To do this, the research proposal needs to discuss your academic background and credentials as well as demonstrate that your proposed ideas have academic merit.

But demonstrating your research's validity and your personal capability to carry it out isn't enough to get your research proposal approved. **Your research proposal also has to cover these things:**

- a. The research methodology you plan to use

- b. The tools and procedures you will use to collect, analyze, and interpret the data you collect
- c. An explanation of how your research fits the budget and other constraints that come with conducting it through your institution, department, or academic program

If you've already read our post on literature reviews, you may be thinking that a research proposal sounds pretty similar. They're more than just similar, though—a literature review is part of a research proposal. It's the section that covers which sources you're using, how you're using them, and why they're relevant. Think of a literature review as a mini-research proposal that fits into your larger, main proposal.

### **Length of Proposal**

Generally, research proposals for bachelor's and master's theses are a few pages long. Research proposals for Ph.D. dissertations and funding requests, are often longer and far more detailed. A research proposal's goal is to clearly outline exactly what your research will entail and accomplish, so including the proposal's word count or page count isn't nearly as important as it is to ensure that all the necessary elements and content are present.

## **Research proposal structure**

A research proposal follows a fairly straightforward structure. In order to achieve the goals described in the previous section, nearly all research proposals include the following sections:

### **Introduction**

Your introduction achieves a few goals:

- Introduces your topic
- States your problem statement and the questions your research aims to answer
- Provides context for your research

In a research proposal, an introduction can be a few paragraphs long. It should be concise, but don't feel like you need to cram all of your information into one paragraph.

In some cases, you need to include an abstract and/or a table of contents in your research proposal. These are included just before the introduction.

## **Background significance**

This is where you explain why your research is necessary and how it relates to established research in your field. Your work might complement existing research, strengthen it, or even challenge it—no matter how your work will “play with” other researchers’ work, you need to express it in detail in your research proposal.

This is also the section where you clearly define the existing problems your research will address. By doing this, you’re explaining why your work is necessary.

In your background section, you’ll also outline how you’ll conduct your research. If necessary, note which related questions and issues you won’t be covering in your research.

## **Literature review**

In your literature review, you introduce all the sources you plan to use in your research. This includes landmark studies and their data, books, and scholarly articles. A literature review isn’t merely a list of sources (that’s what your bibliography is for); a literature review delves into the collection of sources you chose and explains how you’re using them in your research.

## **Research design, methods, and schedule**

In this section, make sure you cover these aspects:

- The type of research you will do. Are you conducting qualitative or quantitative research? Are you collecting original data or working with data collected by other researchers?
- Whether you’re doing experimental, correlational, or descriptive research
- The data you’re working with. For example, if you’re conducting research in the social sciences, you’ll need to describe the population you’re studying. You’ll also need to cover how you’ll select your subjects and how you’ll collect data from them.

The tools you’ll use to collect data.

- ❖ Sampling frame
- ❖ Sampling method
- ❖ Use of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics
- ❖ Will you be running experiments?
- ❖ Conducting surveys?
- ❖ Observing phenomena?

Note all data collection methods here along with why they’re effective methods for your specific research.

Beyond a comprehensive look at your research itself, you’ll also need to include:

- Your research timeline
- Your research budget
- Any potential obstacles you foresee and your plan for handling them

## **Suppositions and implications**

Although you can't know your research's results until you've actually done the work, you should be going into the project with a clear idea of how your work will contribute to your field. This section is perhaps the most critical to your research proposal's argument because it expresses exactly why your research is necessary.

*In this section, make sure you cover the following:*

- Any ways your work can challenge existing theories and assumptions in your field
- Your work will create the foundation for future research
- The practical value of your findings will provide to practitioners, educators, and other academics in your field
- The problems your work can potentially help to fix
- Policies that could be impacted by your findings
- How your findings can be implemented in academia or other settings and how this will improve or otherwise transform these settings

In other words, this section isn't about stating the specific results you expect. Rather, it's where you state how your findings will be valuable.

## **Conclusion**

This is where you wrap it all up. Your conclusion section, just like your conclusion paragraph for an essay, briefly summarizes your research proposal and reinforces your research's stated purpose.

## **Bibliography**

Yes, you need to write a bibliography in addition to your literature review. Unlike your literature review, where you explained the relevance of the sources you chose and in some cases, challenged them, your bibliography simply lists your sources and their authors.

The way you write a citation depends on the style guide you're using. The three most common style guides for academics are MLA, APA, and Chicago, and each has its own particular rules and requirements. Keep in mind that each formatting style has specific guidelines for citing just about any kind of source, including photos, websites, speeches, and YouTube videos.

Sometimes, a full bibliography is not needed. When this is the case, you can include a references list, which is simply a scaled-down list of all the sources you cited in your work. If you're not sure which to write, ask your supervisor.

## **How to write a research proposal**

Research proposals, like all other kinds of academic writing, are written in a formal, objective tone. Keep in mind that being concise is a key component of academic writing; formal does not mean flowery.

Adhere to the structure outlined above. Your reader knows how a research proposal is supposed to read and expects it to fit this template. It's crucial that you present your research proposal in a clear, logical way. Every question the reader has while reading your proposal should be answered by the final section.

### **Common mistakes to avoid when writing a research proposal**

When you're writing a research proposal, avoid these common pitfalls:

#### **Being too wordy**

You should aim to keep your writing as brief and to-the-point as possible. The more economically you can express your purpose and goal, the better.

#### **Failing to cite relevant sources**

When you're conducting research, you're adding to the existing body of knowledge on the subject you're covering. Your research proposal should reference one or more of the landmark research pieces in your field and connect your work to these works in some way. This doesn't just communicate your work's relevance—it also demonstrates your familiarity with the field.

#### **Focusing too much on minor issues**

Including too many questions and issues in your research proposal can detract from your central purpose, weakening the proposal. Save the minor issues for your research paper itself and cover only the major, key issues you aim to tackle in your proposal.

#### **Failing to make a strong argument for your research**

This is perhaps the easiest way to undermine your proposal because it's far more subjective than the others. A research proposal is, in essence, a piece of persuasive writing. That means that although you're presenting your proposal in an objective, academic way, the goal is to get the reader to say "yes" to your work.

This is true in every case, whether your reader is your supervisor, your department head, a graduate school admissions board, a private or government-backed funding provider, or the editor at a journal in which you'd like to publish your work.

### **Polish your writing into a stellar proposal**

When you're asking for approval to conduct research, especially when there's funding involved, you need to be nothing less than 100 percent confident in your proposal. If your research proposal has spelling or grammatical mistakes, an inconsistent or inappropriate tone, or even just awkward phrasing, those will undermine your credibility.



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### **Suppositions and implications**

Although you can't know your research's results until you've actually done the work, you should be going into the project with a clear idea of how your work will contribute to your field. This section is perhaps the most critical to your research proposal's argument because it expresses exactly why your research is necessary.

*In this section, make sure you cover the following:*

- Any ways your work can challenge existing theories and assumptions in your field
- Your work will create the foundation for future research

- The practical value of your findings will provide to practitioners, educators, and other academics in your field
- The problems your work can potentially help to fix
- Policies that could be impacted by your findings
- How your findings can be implemented in academia or other settings and how this will improve or otherwise transform these settings

In other words, this section isn't about stating the specific results you expect. Rather, it's where you state how your findings will be valuable.

## **Conclusion**

This is where you wrap it all up. Your conclusion section, just like your conclusion paragraph for an essay, briefly summarizes your research proposal and reinforces your research's stated purpose.

## **Bibliography**

Yes, you need to write a bibliography in addition to your literature review. Unlike your literature review, where you explained the relevance of the sources you chose and in some cases, challenged them, your bibliography simply lists your sources and their authors.

The way you write a citation depends on the style guide you're using. The three most common style guides for academics are APA, IEEE and Chicago, and each has its own particular rules and requirements. Keep in mind that each formatting style has specific guidelines for citing just about any kind of source, including photos, websites, speeches, and YouTube videos.

Sometimes, a full bibliography is not needed. When this is the case, you can include a references list, which is simply a scaled-down list of all the sources you cited in your work. If you're not sure which to write, ask your supervisor.

## **How to write a research proposal**

Research proposals, like all other kinds of academic writing, are written in a formal, objective tone. Keep in mind that being concise is a key component of academic writing; formal does not mean flowery.

Adhere to the structure outlined above. Your reader knows how a research proposal is supposed to read and expects it to fit this template. It's crucial that you present your research proposal in a clear, logical way. Every question the reader has while reading your proposal should be answered by the final section.

## **Common mistakes to avoid when writing a research proposal**

When you're writing a research proposal, avoid these common pitfalls:

### **Being too wordy**

You should aim to keep your writing as brief and to-the-point as possible. The more economically you can express your purpose and goal, the better.

### **Failing to cite relevant sources**

When you're conducting research, you're adding to the existing body of knowledge on the subject you're covering. Your research proposal should reference one or more of the landmark research pieces in your field and connect your work to these works in some way. This doesn't just communicate your work's relevance—it also demonstrates your familiarity with the field.

### **Focusing too much on minor issues**

Including too many questions and issues in your research proposal can detract from your central purpose, weakening the proposal. Save the minor issues for your research paper itself and cover only the major, key issues you aim to tackle in your proposal.

### **Failing to make a strong argument for your research**

This is perhaps the easiest way to undermine your proposal because it's far more subjective than the others. A research proposal is, in essence, a piece of persuasive writing. That means that although you're presenting your proposal in an objective, academic way, the goal is to get the reader to say "yes" to your work.

This is true in every case, whether your reader is your supervisor, your department head, a graduate school admissions board, a private or government-backed funding provider, or the editor at a journal in which you'd like to publish your work.

### **Polish your writing into a stellar proposal**

When you're asking for approval to conduct research, especially when there's funding involved, you need to be nothing less than 100 percent confident in your proposal. If your research proposal has spelling or grammatical mistakes, an inconsistent or inappropriate tone, or even just awkward phrasing, those will undermine your credibility.