**Proposal Letter**

In about 1-2 pages single-spaced, propose the topic for your final research project. You may determine the audience for this proposal. In many cases, students choose to make *me* the audience for the letter, since they are proposing the topic for the final paper for my approval. You may be creative, though, and address this proposal to the audience for your final project, if you deem it appropriate.

**Final Research Project**

For your final research project, write a formal report on a technical topic of your choice. Types of formal reports you might choose include the following:

* Proposal
* Analytical report
* Recommendation report
* Feasibility study
* Scientific research report
* Magazine article

You may not do an informational report, since I want to see analysis and a strong thesis, not merely a presentation of facts. In rare cases, if it seems challenging or useful enough, I will let students do instructional manuals for this project—so if you have an idea for a manual, run it by me first.

**What’s an appropriate topic?**

Your topic should be *technical* and *complex* enough for a project of this length. It should also involve some research, though how much research will depend on the topic.

**What’s my audience?**

Please *specify your audience* as part of this assignment in a logical place on the document—the cover and/or the introductory letter. Your audience may be whomever you choose. It could be a person or group that exists: for example, the Speaker of the House, a specific congressman/woman, your boss at your research lab or your job, Chancellor Wrighton, the Channel 5 news production team, Boeing, the Humane Society, the City of St. Louis, etc. It could also be a hypothetical person or group.

**How do I format it?**

You may format it however you feel it’s most organized and most easy-to-read. The 15-20 page guideline is for double-spaced papers. You may choose to single-space it, to present it electronically, or to format it in other ways as appropriate to your topic and audience. Adjust length accordingly. *Please feel free to make the project as long as you need it to be, within reason.*

**What’s my process?**

Here are some tips about the writing process.

* Identify a few potential topics.
* Do some research on each of them. (It’s your own feasibility study on the best research topic!)
* Decide on your topic.
* Outline a format for the entire document, and consider outlining individual sections.
* Write the body of the document first. The summary will be *very difficult* if you try to write it first—it’s much easier after you’ve written the body.
* Write the summary.
* Complete the front and back matter.
* Format the document.
* Revise, edit, and proofread.
* Ask yourself: Does this showcase my knowledge of the subject, my analytical skills, and my writing skills?
* Ask yourself: Is this professionally written and professional-looking? Would I be proud to turn this in to my audience? Is this one of the best things I’ve ever written?