

Revision Worksheet for Proposals

If you use this worksheet correctly, you should read the your proposal three separate times, once each for content, organization, and style.

Content

In the introduction, does the proposal clearly state its a) subject, b) purpose, and c) main point?

Do you believe more background information or forecasting is needed in the introduction to build a context for the readers?

In the body of the proposal, does each paragraph have a clear claim that guides the rest of the paragraph? Does that claim appear close to the beginning of the paragraph? If not, is there a good reason for not having it at the beginning of the paragraph?

In each paragraph, are there enough examples and/or reasoning to back up the claim in each paragraph. If not, what could you add to strengthen the argument for the claim?

Does the proposal cover the following slots: Situation, Objectives, Plan/Solution, Qualifications, Benefits? (the proposal need not have a section for each of these slots, but they should all be addressed in a significant way).

Does the situation section discuss the problem and its causes?

Does the plan section answer the questions “how” and “why” for each action and describe deliverables? Are the steps clearly specified?

Does the qualifications section make the argument “We are the best qualified firm to do this work”?

Does the benefits section reinforce both “hard benefits” (deliverables) and “soft benefits” (themes)?

Does the conclusion (or benefits section if that’s how you wrote it)
1) reinforce the main point of the proposal and 2) offer a clear next step for the readers?

Organization

Does each section follow a logical order? [i.e. Opening, Body, Closing (?)]

Does the opening in each section (including subhead) identify the subject, purpose, and main point of the section? Would more background or forecasting in some sections help you read?

Are the situation and solution sections logically “partitioned?” In other words, does the situation section break the problem down into logical parts (causes), and is the solution section structured according to time-based steps or phases?

Do you think the objectives are well placed? Or, could they be placed at the end of the situation section or the beginning of the solutions section.

In the situation section, are problems/causes highlighted in the topic sentences of paragraphs? Are they expressed as claims?

In the plan section, are *steps* highlighted in the topic sentences of paragraphs? Are they expressed as claims?

In the benefits section, are benefits highlighted in the topic sentences of paragraphs? Are they expressed as claims?

Look at the closing of each section. Is it necessary? Does it try to add any extra information that would be better handled in the body paragraphs of the section? Could it be shortened?

Style

Does the proposal use plain style, where appropriate? Are there any complex sentences that could be simplified with the plain style techniques discussed in Chapter 8?

Does the proposal use a consistent tone?

Are there any themes (authoritative or emotional) that could be used to make the proposal more persuasive?