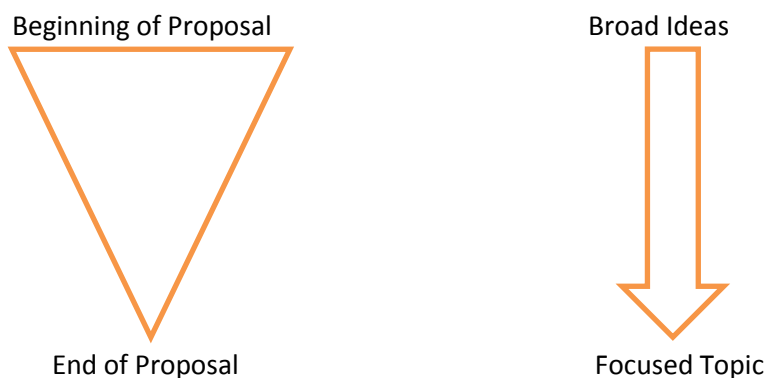


How to Write a Research Proposal

We will be using your research proposal during this semester to help you stay focused as you write several papers that will culminate in the researched argument. Proposals often have a funnel shape and a "movement" that goes from very broad to very focused., The brief proposal should go from a very broad range of ideas to a much more specific, single research idea at the end.

The proposal should be made up of two paragraphs: one that provides some background ideas at the beginning to establish a brief context. You have to tell the readers what general topic you will consider and then guide them (and yourself) to the specific research question you will address. Because the first essay is itself a background piece that gives a context for your later argument in Paper 3, your proposal will be like having a very small model (the proposal itself) for your first essay. In the first paragraph, you will only have 4-5 sentences, as you start narrowing down the broader topic. The last sentence of your paragraph may already signal to the reader where you will be going in your more focused research question/thesis.

In the second paragraph of your proposal, you will start with the idea that you ended the first paragraph on. Now you can start moving to the more focused area your research will cover. You could even use questions to draw your readers in. The argument doesn't come until the last paper, so do not take a stand in this paragraph, only offer to explore the various aspects of the topic but less broadly than taking up too large a topic than cannot be covered in a 6-8 page paper.



EXAMPLE

In ancient times, childbirth was not connected with illness or healers. It was a natural and normal process in which the laboring woman was attended to by female family members and perhaps other women who were experienced in helping women during childbirth. In more recent times, childbirth developed into a "medicalized" process, one that had to be in a hospital or clinic with doctors and nurses attending the pregnant female. In the last several decades, however, some women have turned to "natural" birthing methods and used midwives and birthing centers for the birth of their children. Different natural birthing methods have been proposed by numerous proponents. One of these more controversial methods of natural childbirth is called the Leboyer method.

In this research paper, I will describe and define the Leboyer method, write about the history of Dr. Leboyer and where, how and why this method originated. It's important, too, for readers to get an understanding of why and when this method became controversial and some of the important factors in natural childbirth that are addressed and not addressed in this particular type of natural labor. One question I have is whether or not there is a particular type of person that chooses this method; in other words, is there are particular demographic group that chooses this method and in which countries is it presently most popular? If I can find interviews with women and families who have used this method, I will be able to gain more insight into the method and the reasons it is used in some places and not others and by some families who use the Leboyer method instead of other methods.

Attach a possible outline for subtopics in your first essay that you suggested in your paragraphs above.