



# TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL WRITING

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The terminology used by funding agencies for the various components of a research proposal (and their sequence) varies. I have used fairly standard terminology. Almost every agency expects you to address the 10 questions below in some part of the proposal. You will change terms and sequencing to satisfy the requirements of the particular agency.

## TEN QUESTIONS:

1. What = the research question (research problem).
2. Your Answer = hypothesis.
3. How have other scholars answered this question = literature review
4. Why other answers are inadequate = need.
5. Why your answer is a better answer = theory.
6. Why should we answer this question = significance.
7. How to answer the question = methods.
8. How you know when you have answered = evaluation.
9. How much time you need to answer the question = time table.
10. How much it will cost to answer the question = budget.

## TEN TIPS:

1. The question you want to answer is your research problem.
2. The answer to your research question is your hypothesis.
3. How the research question has been answered before by others is your literature review. This is also the basis of the alternative hypothesis.
4. What is missing in how others have answered this question is your statement of need.
5. The set of logically connected concepts and assumptions built into those concepts that are necessary to make your answer to the question plausible is your theory.
6. Why it is important to answer this question is your statement of significance.
7. The steps you will take to answer the question is your methodology.
8. How you will know that you have answered the question is your evaluation techniques.
9. How long it will take you to answer the question is your time table.
10. How much it will cost to answer the question is your budget.

**SUMMARY:** What is your question? What is your answer? How have others answered? Why is your answer better? Why do we need to do this research? What will we be able to do as a result of doing this research? How are you going to answer the question? How will you know you have answered the question? How long will it take? How much will it cost?