

The rhetorical purpose of a grant proposal is to

- convince the audience of the relevance of your proposed research
- inspire the audience's belief in your potential as a graduate student and as a future researcher
- demonstrate your ability to market your ideas is the most critical feature of the art of grant writing

1 Establishing a territory

- a. Making centrality claims
“Recently, there has been wide interest in”
“The study of has become an important aspect of”
- b. Making topic generalizations
“There is now much evidence to support the hypothesis that”
“There are many situations where”
- c. Reviewing items of previous research
“X has pointed out that”
“X's theory (2000) claims that”

2 Do your research and consult with your advisors about the present state of the field

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Has there been much published on this topic?
- If so, what are the seminal pieces of research/criticism?
- If not, why is your topic still worthy of academic inquiry?

Keep this section as concise and specific as possible and keep in mind that the purpose of establishing territory in your proposal is to indicate how and why your project is original and relevant

3 Establishing a niche

- a. Counter-claiming
“This existing research, however, is misguided because”
- b. Indicating a gap
“However, there has been little research that”
“The research has tended to focus on, rather than”
- c. Question-raising
“A question remains whether”

- d. Continuing a tradition
 - “The differences need to be analyzed”
 - “This must represent”

4 Argue positively (rather than negatively) about how your project relates to existing positions

Don’t say: “The existing treatment of Topic A by Writer X is superficial and inadequate, and so my project”

Do say: “The existing treatment of Topic A by Writer X has provided a starting point for me to focus more specifically on”

5 Occupying the niche

- a. Outlining purposes
 - “The main purpose of this research is to”
 - “My study will explore the relationship between”
- b. Announcing methodology, claims, or contributions to knowledge
 - “My methodology will involve”
 - “I will argue that”
 - “My hypothesis is that”
- c. Indicating research project structure
 - “In chapter one of my thesis, I will examine”