Tutoring Guide for Technical Writing: Proposals

The Assignment in General

A proposal is a document that outlines the goals of a project, explains how the goals will be executed, and argues why the project is necessary. The ultimate goal of a proposal is often to acquire funds, obtain permission to execute a project, or to win a project. A proposal must convince the intended audience that the project could benefit all the parties involved.

The Paper's Structure and Development

Every proposal has three sections:

1. **The technical section**
   » Clearly presents a problem
   » Explains how the project will go into effect
   » Gives an overview of the proposed solution

2. **The managerial section**
   » Deals with the "people" aspect of the project
   » Answers work-related questions
     • How many people the project requires
     • How much time the project will take
     • What kind of commitment people must make
   » The more detailed, the better!

3. **The financial section**
   » Displays any costs the project requires
   » Breaks down costs into four areas:
     i. Wages, salaries, and fees
     ii. Operating expenses
     iii. Materials and equipment
     iv. Miscellaneous costs
   » Again, the more detailed, the better!

Of Special Note

- Always ask what the purpose of the proposal is at the beginning of the session. The purpose of the proposal (as well as the intended audience) will determine the document's overall tone, style, and approach.
- While working through the managerial section with a student, the tutor should ask the writer questions about the organization's credibility and should encourage the writer to include those items.
- In the financial section, a tutor should encourage the writer to use honest estimates.