Parts of a Research Proposal

Your instructor may provide you with a form or formula to follow in your proposal. If, however, you are working from scratch, here are the parts of a typical proposal.

1. **Introduction:** In a brief paragraph, introduce your research idea. Also state why the topic is important to you and is worth researching. Provide any background information that the instructor may need.

2. **Description:** Discuss your proposed research idea; consider the following types of information.
   - The **central issue** or **concern** about the topic of your research
   - The **main question** (based on the central issue) you hope that your research will answer
   - Additional questions or **subtopics** that your research might address
   - A **working thesis** or **hypothesis** based on the main question
   - The **outcome(s)** that you expect from your research, including the value in terms of knowledge for yourself and others

3. **Plan (methods and procedures):** Explain how you plan to answer your questions, develop your thesis, prove your hypotheses, and so on. Include the following types of information in your plan.
   - A description of your **primary** (firsthand) **research**
   - An explanation of **research tools** you plan to use (catalogs, reference works, lab equipment, survey software)
   - A **working bibliography** identifying your initial list of resources

4. **Schedule:** List deadlines that are part of the assignment and deadlines that you’ve set for yourself.

5. **Approval Request:** Ask for feedback and approval from your instructor.
Sample Research Proposal

In this sample, Gwendolyn Mackenzie proposes to analyze Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* in terms of its portrayal of gender prejudice. The novel and the 2005 film adaptation will both be addressed in the analysis.

Film Studies 201
Spring Semester Research Proposal

Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* as Fiction and Film
Gwendolyn Mackenzie

For years, I have enjoyed reading Jane Austen's novels and watching films based on them. In fact, the whole phenomenon surrounding her fascinates me. Nearly 200 years after her death, Jane Austen's novels still captivate readers, filmmakers, and filmgoers. Why do so many of us find so much enjoyment in her work? For my research paper in Film Studies 201, I will explore one aspect of this phenomenon as it relates to *Pride and Prejudice* and the 2005 film adaptation directed by Joe Wright.

**Description:** Specifically, I want to see how the novel and film explore gender prejudice. My main research question is, What sense do these texts make of prejudice as it relates to relationships between men and women? These would be additional questions I might consider:

- What did prejudice mean for Austen, and what does it mean today?
- In the novel and film, how is the problem of prejudice presented as an issue of gender?
- How is the portrayal of gender prejudice similar and/or different in the novel and film?
- How is gender prejudice in Austen’s time similar to and/or different from the issue in today’s world?
- How is prejudice central to the relationship between Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy?
- How is prejudice at work elsewhere in the story?

My working thesis is as follows: The 2005 film portrayal of gender inequality in *Pride and Prejudice* highlights and intensifies the issue of gender inequality introduced in the novel.
This study of gender prejudice will allow me (1) to appreciate the treatment of this theme in fiction and in film, (2) to understand more fully film adaptations, and (3) to explain in a small way the Jane Austen phenomenon. As part of the project, I will write a 6-8 page paper and make a 10-minute presentation in class.

**Plan:** My primary research will involve rereading the novel and reviewing the 2005 Joe Wright film adaptation. In terms of secondary research, I have searched our library’s online catalog and EBSCOhost for books and articles relevant to my topic. While some of the works below were published before the 2005 film, they should still give useful ideas.

**Working Bibliography**

**Primary Sources**


**Secondary Sources**


To get a better sense of how Jane Austen fans react to this novel and film, I may research some Austen discussion groups.

**Schedule:** Here is my schedule for completing this project.

1. Finish rereading the novel and reviewing the film: November 13
2. Complete secondary research: November 20
3. Develop my outline: November 23
4. Finish first draft: November 30
5. Revise, edit, and proofread the paper: December 4
6. Develop presentation: December 7
7. Make the presentation and submit the paper: December 9

**Approval Request:** Dr. Rajan, I would appreciate your feedback on my proposal, as well as your approval of my plan.