Proposal:
A proposal is a persuasive document and is an offer for you to do research, provide a product, or provide a service to someone—usually a company. Proposals can also be written to obtain funds for projects. The point of a proposal is to make things happen. Proposals contain specific information. In order to cover every area of what you need to put into a proposal, think of who, what, when, where, how, and why. Also, present your proposal in a logical order and provide your reader with facts. The most persuasive edge will be your writing, your organization, and how your document looks.

❖ Audience: Know your audience.

Note: When you write a proposal, you need to do the pre-writing activities of planning, organizing, researching, before you begin the actual draft, followed by drafting, revising, editing, and final drafting. When you write a proposal, you must have your research done. That is how you convince your audience that you can do the job, research, or provide the service.

The Writing Process for the Proposal:
➢ Audience: One of your first areas of research will be to know your audience.
  ✓ Two questions to ask:
    1. What is his or her knowledge? (Having this information dictates what technical language you can use effectively and how much description and explanation you will be required to provide).
    2. What is his or her attitude? (If you know his or her attitude, you will know how persuasive you will need to be, or what areas that you are going to have to push and what areas you can gloss over).

➢ Purpose: You must know what you are doing and why. (If you do not know the “what” and the “why”, you are not going to be effective in persuading your audience of your agenda. Do the research).

➢ Research: You must do your research in order to make a persuasive argument.
  ✓ Research what the audience needs, what they have, what they can afford.
  ✓ Research information about the product or service.
  ✓ Research what and how you are going to provide.

❖ Note: If you are not prepared to create some kind of budget, then you are not going to succeed.

➢ Proposal Type: Know the type of proposal and write Accordingly.
  ✓ Internal or external:
    a. Internal: An argument for goods or service made within an organization.
       These are meant to benefit the organization in which you are a member.
       i. Recommend research for an organization
       ii. Recommend that a purchase be made
       iii. Recommend a change in the policy and procedure
    b. External: submitted to another organization for goods or services.
       i. Recommend research
       ii. Market analysis
       iii. Recommend for goods or services
External proposals can either be solicited or non-solicited.

**Solicited Proposals:** When a company needs information, goods, or services, it will publish one of two types of statements: information for bid (IFB) or a request for proposal (RFP).

- **Information for bid (IFB)** normally is used for standard products. For instance, if a company needs a new water fountain, it informs water fountain companies that they are in the market. Those companies, then, will submit an IFB. The company that offers the lowest bid will get the job.

- **RFP Request for Proposal** is used for more specific products or services. For instance, if someone wanted a specialized alarm system for his or her company, she or he might contact a company that specializes in his or her need and ask for a RFP.

  **Note:** Most solicited proposals will follow the formatting of the company that is asking for the proposal. Before you begin, go to the website, find the form, and follow it. Give them what they ask for with good writing skills.

**Unsolicited Proposals:** Unsolicited is similar to a solicited proposal but doesn’t refer to an RFP. Because proposals are expensive and require a lot of work, there are really no true unsolicited. In order to do all the work, there is an expectation that a service is needed.

The **deliverables** are what the end result will be: goods, research, publications, etc. These must be specific. If you are providing research, your deliverables will need to provide your audience with goods. For instance, you will deliver a conference presentation, a publication, information that will improve policy.

Proposals are legally binding, so it is important that you do your research.