

Exercise II Warm-Up: Research Proposal *Shark Tank*

Objectives and Outcomes:

- Students demonstrate understanding the research proposal as a genre by composing a research proposal for presentation to their peers.
- Students engage in pre-writing activities and planning
- Students cooperate and communicate to build understanding
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of audience, rhetorical appeals, and rhetorical situation
- Students will engage in reflection about their presentations

Materials Needed:

Teacher Materials:

- i. Role Sheets (attached)
- ii. Whiteboard
- iii. Markers
- iv. Research journals

Context of Class:

This class takes place as part of the Composition 1120 curriculum prior to beginning work on Exercise II. Both the proposal and Exercise II require students to compose research proposals that:

- Identify an area of research related to communities and improvement of quality of life within those communities
- Explain why this area is worth investigating and its potential to improve lives beyond the institution
- Identify a larger research question that you hope to answer, and the significance of that research question (“So what?” or “Why is this important?”)
- Build on what the reader might already know (or think they know) about the topic
- Identify potential challenges you think you might encounter in researching this topic

Prior Reading:

Primary Sources

-*From Inquiry to Academic Writing*, 4th Edition (Chapter 5)

Secondary Sources

-Students may conduct any research they wish during their preparation for the presentation of proposal

Prior Knowledge:

-Students should understand how audiences respond to certain rhetorical techniques. They can use *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* in their writing to persuade their readers. However, they should also begin to understand that many audiences will have a “so what?” attitude about their research. They know that they must provide justification for their research proposal in terms of identifying a real need and potential benefits to communities that come from this proposal.

Looking Forward:

-Students are preparing to compose Exercise II, a research proposal, in which they will propose their topics for the final research paper. They will need to articulate why this topic is important, what the “current state of affairs” is with their topic, who/ what is affected by the current state of research, and what changes they hope to enact through research and writing about this topic. They must clearly articulate their proposal for a non-expert, non-institutional audience.

Introduction to Today's Class:

The day's objectives are displayed on the projector, as well as the deadline for the upcoming paper. The teacher connects today's individual objectives with the summative assessment. The teacher then bridges the day's objectives with a freewriting activity (then also displayed on projector).

Overview of Main Event:

For today's class, students will work in groups to devise a research proposal. They will conduct preliminary research, arrive at a research question, outline methods for answering this question, and compose a proposal in which they vie for funding with which to investigate the research question.

- 2-3 Students will not be placed in groups. These students fulfill the role of "Sharks."
 - See Role sheets for additional instructions
- The remaining students will be placed in 4-5 groups of 4 students each. These students will develop proposals and vie for research funding.
 - See Role sheets for additional instructions
- Each student group, including Sharks, will be given a "role sheet" (attached)
- Student research groups will conduct brief research and talk amongst themselves to generate ideas for research projects which meet their own goals, while meeting the interests of their funders.
- Sharks should walk around to each group and listen as they formulate ideas, work out problems, and conduct research. Sharks are more than welcome to make suggestions, point out issues, or express their needs.
- After a set amount of time (20-30 minutes), each group will present their proposals to the Sharks.
- Sharks, working alone or together, will take ~5 minutes to determine funding allocations.
- On the board, a grid is drawn representing each group and Shark. Each funder should allocate their funds. They are under no obligation to fund all groups.
 - See sample funding allocation matrix:

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Shark One	0\$	0\$	\$7 Million	\$3 Million
Shark Two	\$1 Million	\$1 Million	\$4 Million	\$4 Million

- After Sharks have allocated all their funds, each Shark provides a brief statement about their reasons for funding—or denying funding—for each group.
 - They are encouraged to make comments on the articulation of each group's
 - research goals, their awareness of audience, and the likelihood that the allocated amount of funds will realistically lead to the reaching of that goal.

Wrap-Up ~5 minutes

- After funds have been "disbursed," the teacher should provide a brief bridging conversation that points out the intersections between this activity and their goals for completing Exercise II.
- For homework, students will compose an entry in their research journals (about 200 words) about how they incorporated the audience into their funding proposals. They should reflect on the rhetorical situation, its challenges, and the outcome of the activity.

“Shark” Role Sheet 1 and 2:

You are the committee chair of a non-profit organization, the goal of which is promote community health and wellness. Your committee has approved \$10 million in funding to be disbursed however you see fit. You have the following guidelines:

- Your award **must** be given to a group which demonstrates a commitment to community health or wellness.
- Preference should be given to groups which have a well-articulated plan of action for how they will spend the money.
- You may break up the award amounts.
- You should be able to explain your award amount to each group, including those who are awarded \$0.

Proposal Committee #1:

You are the lead researcher for a team of childhood psychologists. You and your colleagues are interested in promoting health and wellness among children and young adults ages 3-13. Specifically, you are concerned with children spending too much time engaged with technology (phones, television, video games, etc.). You want to create a communal space in which children and their parents can “unplug” and “unwind.” However, you need to perform research on how best to do this.

Proposal Committee #2:

You are the lead researcher for a group promoting environmental awareness, sustainable building practices, and emissions reductions. You and your colleagues are interested in promoting environmental education to teenagers and young adults. Specifically, you are concerned with educating the next generation of environmental activists. However, you need to know how best reach this demographic and how to communicate effectively with a wide network of youths.

Proposal Committee #3:

You represent a group of teaching professionals. You have recently conducted research, and your team has discovered that record numbers of teachers are leaving the profession. You and your colleagues are interested in encouraging new teachers to join the profession, but you are equally interested in retaining the teachers that you already have. You hope to acquire research funding for a project that will achieve (or help to achieve) one or both of these goals

Proposal Committee #4:

You represent a group of advertising executives for a major beverage brand. Recently, your company has been shaken by accusations that your brand promotes childhood obesity and exacerbates existing health issues that are affecting young people. You and your colleagues have been tasked to embark on a research mission. The company executives want to create a health-conscious image while maintain profit and market share. You hope to acquire research funding for a project or product that will achieve both of these goals.