

Writing a Book Proposal

Nonfiction books typically require a book proposal. This can be written before or after the manuscript is finished. An average proposal ranges from 30 to 60 pages, but they can be shorter or longer depending on the book. This is the document that will help you land an agent or publisher, since most won't even look at your manuscript if they don't like your proposal. It is important to spend time researching before writing and submitting a proposal. Below is a generic outline for a standard book proposal. Note that almost every agent and publisher will have specific requirements. If they don't specify their requirements, use this as a guideline.

Overview

This describes the books' hook and concept as well as your qualifications and platform.

Audience

This describes your target market.

About the Author

This section is all about your qualifications and platform. If you are using a coauthor, you will also include information about him or her. If you are using a ghostwriter, you may choose to include their information if you wish but it is not necessary.

Competition Analysis

This describes how your book is similar and different from other titles in your genre.

Marketing and Promotion

This describes how you will use your platform and media connections to market your book. Agents and publishers want to buy books that they think will sell, so you must convince them that your book is marketable and profitable.

Outline

You will provide an outline of your book that includes brief chapter summaries.

Sample Chapter

Most agents and editors request at least one sample chapter. Some will request more.

Attachments

You may choose to include attachments that are relevant such as magazine articles you have published on the topic.