Sample Organization for a Research Proposal

1	**Title of Project:** *Give your project a working title, which may or may not become the title of your paper.*
2	**Background:** *Explain the general situation of your subject making reference to scholarly research and any secondary sources of relevance. Describe any relevant previous research conducteded on this or related topics situating your proposal in relation to existing scholarship. Be specfiic and concise. Write a brief introduction to your subject and situate your research subject carefully in relation to what precedes it academically.*
3	**Preliminary Thesis:** *Explain what you hope your research will find or show. State your question or series of questions before you begin your research. After you have conducted significant research you should be able to answer your question(s) in one or two sentences, which will become the thesis of t he final paper. Ensure this preliminary thesis is solid, coherent, and realizable.*
4	**Significance:** (This is specfiic for theses and dissertations) *Explain why this topic is worth considering, or this question or series of questions is worth answering. Answer the following questions: why should your instructor let you select this topic? What do you hope to learn from it? What will this new knowledge add to the field of knowledge that already exists on this topic? What new perspective will you bring to the topic? what use might your final research paper have for others in this field or in the general public? Who might you decide to share your findings with once the project is complete?*
5	**Description:** *Describe the kind of research you will conduct to complete this project (library research, internet research, interviews, observations, ethnographies, etc.)*
6	**Methodology:** "*Vj ku'ku'ur gehkke'hqt'i tcf wcvg'r cr gtu.'vj gugu'cpf 'f kuugtvcvkqpu+ *Explain how you will conduct your research in as much detail as possible. If you will consult others (such as a statistician, an ethnographer, or a librarian) explain what role they will serve and how you hope they will enhance your development of an appropriate methodology for this project. Discuss the kinds of sources you hope to consult and the methods you will use to extract and process the information you gather in as much detail as is possible at this stage. (As the project is underway you might find the need to revise your methodology, explore new types of source material, and/or adopt new methods of gathering and processing data. If this happens, revise this section of the proposal.)*
7	**Problems:** (This is specfiic for theses and dissertations) *Describe the problems you expect to encounter and how you hope to solve them. For example, texts might be unavailable, necessitating travel to other libraries or use of inter-library loan facilities; people you had hoped to interview might be unavailable or unwilling to participate, necessitating that you select other interviewees or change the focus; internet sites might be down or no longer available, etc. (Try to imagine every possible problem so that you have contingency plans and the project doesn't become derailed.)*
8	**Bibliography**: *Make a list of texts you plan to consult. If you are writing a library-based research paper you should aim to make a list of at least 30 potential sources (40 is better), which you will then narrow down as you conduct the research. Many sources initially seem relevant, but turn out not to be, so it is always better to list all sources that might be of interest. As you eliminate sources, cross them off of this list. Mark sources that are particularly useful, and add new sources as you come across them. This will enable you to make a Works Cited list at the end of your project (i.e.: a list of only the works you have summarized, paraphrased, or quoted from in the paper.)*