

# Grant Writing: Yes, You Can!



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# Top 5 Excuses for Why You Can't Write a Grant



The first step to becoming a successful grant writer is to stop convincing yourself that you can't write a grant! Teachers and administrators are masters of developing excuses and justifications for why they do or do not do certain things. Stop the cycle – you can write a successful grant proposal and earn money for your school.

Here are the Top 5 Excuses for Why You Can't Write a Grant:

1. I'm not good at writing.
2. I don't have enough experience.
3. I don't have the time.
4. I don't have a chance!
5. My school gives me everything I need.



Now, list all of the qualities you have that would make YOU a successful grant writer:

Refer back to this list often when you get discouraged. It can be a powerful motivator when the going gets tough.

# 5 Steps to Writing a Winning Proposal



The process of writing a grant is pretty standard, regardless of the type of grant for which you are applying. These five basic steps will help to get you started on your search for the perfect opportunity and the process of writing your winning proposal.

1. Develop an idea for an innovative project or program. The more unique your project idea, the better it will stand out from the rest. Innovation is key to a successful proposal. What are some innovative programs that you would like to institute or expand in your school?



2. Find a grant-funding organization with funding priorities and a mission that matches your project idea. Refer to Appendix A, the Grant Resource Page for places to begin your organization-search.
3. Follow the grant proposal guidelines and speak in a language that the organization will understand. Highlight key points and keep your writing concise.
4. Revise, edit, and have others help you improve your proposal.
5. Ensure all deadlines are met (proposal and follow-up reports). Manners matter – send thank you notes!

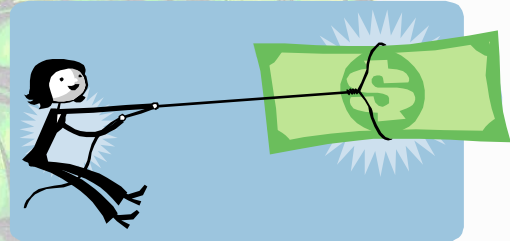
# 5 Most Common Sections of a Proposal



Teachers have it a bit easier than the rest of the players in the non-profit world. Typically, grants for schools and educational institutions are more concise than those that you would find elsewhere. This handout is created under the assumption that you will be pursuing private foundation, local organization, and corporate proposals in the \$50-5,000 range. More extensive proposals or grants written to meet federal requests for proposals will be considerably more complex. Build upon small successes and master the grant-writing process before you attempt a substantial proposal.

In addition to a standard application form, most of these smaller grants include these common proposal sections:

- 💰 Project Description or Abstract
- 💰 Goals and Objectives
- 💰 Project Timeline or Methods
- 💰 Method of Evaluation
- 💰 Budget



## Project Description or Abstract

In this section, you will describe the need for the funds as well as your plans for eliminating this need through your project. Whenever possible, quantify the need.

### *Example:*

At the Butler School, only 10% of the time spent on science instruction at the sixth grade is dedicated to physical science objectives. Generally, students score 8 points lower on physical science tests as compared to life science assessments. Within this limited time frame, students must be engaged in meaningful, experiential, hands-on activities in order to develop an understanding of the abstract physics principles they study.

After discussing why this project is needed, you will describe the project you propose and how it will solve these problems. Remember, innovation is key – highlight the ways that this project is different and how it will improve learning for your students.

## 5 Most Common Sections of a Proposal, Cont.



### Goals and Objectives

This section of the proposal is where you discuss the overarching goals and objectives for the program and that the impacts you foresee are meaningful and relevant. Goals are umbrella statements about what you hope will be achieved on a large-scale, long-term basis.

*Example:*

Goal 1 – To improve students’ ability to communicate about physical science phenomena.

Objectives are directly related to your goals. They break your goal into measurable increments of success. Whatever methods you choose to reach these objectives (discussed later) will provide steps toward achieving these checkpoints of success.

*Example:*

Goal 1, Objective 1 – Within the 4-week unit on physical science, integrate 10 physical science content words into students’ working vocabularies.

Your goals and objectives should match the need you describe in your Project Description. They should include all of the students you target in that needs statement. Your objectives must be reasonable and limited to what can actually be achieved in your timeframe.

### Project Timeline or Methods

Your Project Timeline will clearly outline the steps you plan to take in order to meet your objectives, and ultimately your goals. Be very specific and descriptive when you discuss your methods.

*Example:*

Goal 1, Objective 1, Method 1 – Within the first two weeks of the unit on physical science, provide 3 opportunities for students to describe a physical process to a small group using posted vocabulary words.

Sometimes grant makers would like to see this section in a timeline form. Whether you are required to write your methods in the form of text or a timeline, be sure to include the approximate time it will take to accomplish each method.

## 5 Most Common Sections of a Proposal, Cont.



### Methods of Evaluation

It is critical that you explain how you will evaluate your program. The grant maker wants to know how you will measure the success of the funding they provide. For smaller grants, simple methods of evaluation are acceptable. The most important consideration of all is that you have some way of knowing that your project was a success. Here are some common Methods of Evaluation:

- 👤👤👤 Post-Test – In this evaluation format, you assess the project success without any regard for whether this particular project was what contributed to the success. Let's say you wanted students to learn and use 10 physical science vocabulary words. At the end of the unit, you test them on their ability to use those words. This is a method of success, but there is no guarantee that students did not already know the words ahead of time. For some students, there was no improvement at all, but your project was nevertheless labeled a “success.”
- 👤👤👤 Pre-Test/Post-Test – This format takes the post-test a bit further. At the onset of the unit, you measure your students' understanding by administering a pre-test. That same pre-test is used as a post-test. In this way, you can determine the growth of your students over the course of your project.
- 👤👤👤 Focus Groups/Satisfaction Surveys – In this format, you gather direct participant feedback. You can call together a small group of students to evaluate the program with an independent facilitator. Or, you could distribute a satisfaction survey for the entire group to evaluate the success of the project.

### Budget

One of the most difficult aspects of writing a grant proposal is developing the budget for your project. Yet, this is the “make or break” section of your request. Your project must be reasonable in its request, yet the funds you receive must be sufficient to meet the goals and objectives you have described.

Use current catalogs to price the supplies you will need for your project. Be sure to anticipate shipping charges and other costs. When outlining your budget, be sure to provide budget details on some of your items. For instance, if you are requesting a computer, be sure to detail the type, speed, capability, hardware, and software of the device you will be purchasing. While your line item may seem like a budget overshoot to a grant maker, if you explain exactly what you are purchasing, your grant maker will better understand that you are not inflating your budget.

## 5 Most Common Sections of a Proposal, Cont.



Some grants will provide for salaries or indirect costs. Again, be reasonable and realistic. If the project budget appears to be beyond the scope of what you plan to do, a grant maker will not fund your proposal. You have one chance to convince the grant maker that your project will meet your goals and objectives.

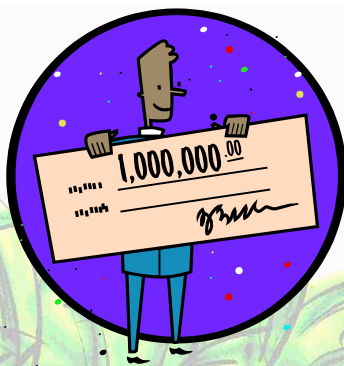
## Top 5 Reasons a Proposal is Not Funded



Avoid these pitfalls. You have dedicated your time and energy to making your proposal successful.

- ☹ Don't force-fit your project to the grant guidelines.
  - ☺ Choose a grant that will better match your project.
- ☹ Don't disregard the grant guidelines.
  - ☺ Follow each and every direction that is on the proposal request. Even margins, size of font, headings, and page limits can disqualify a grant proposal!
- ☹ Don't inflate your budget.
  - ☺ Your grant maker wants to give money to someone who is reasonable and prudent. How would you like other people to spend your money?
- ☹ Don't send your proposal unedited.
  - ☺ Have at least 2 of your colleagues check over your proposal for accuracy and appearance. Grant makers will lose confidence in you if your proposal is riddled with errors or sloppy.
- ☹ Don't forget your manners.
  - ☺ Grant makers are real people, too. Develop a relationship with your grant maker before and after the proposal deadline. Correspond with the grant maker to check whether your idea will match their funding priorities before you begin writing. Remember to send a thank-you card or note if your proposal is funded. Always follow the reporting guidelines to update your grant maker about the success of your project on a regular basis.

## Keep in Touch!



I want to know how successful you have been writing grants for your classroom, school, or organization. Please stay in touch. Perhaps we could even start a nationwide collaborative project – who has an innovative idea to start us off?

## How to Contact this Presenter



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# Appendix A – List of Grant Sources



## Sites to Find a Listing of Grants

<http://eelink.net/pages/Grants+--+General+Information> – list of environmental education-specific grants

[www.educationworld.com/a\\_admin/grants/additional\\_grants.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/grants/additional_grants.shtml) – find grant information and links to applications

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/funding/> – sign up to receive the free weekly newsletter and learn about deadline and ongoing funding opportunities

[www.fundsnetsservices.com/educ01.htm](http://www.fundsnetsservices.com/educ01.htm) – use this list of grant links to find a grant that meets the needs of your project

[www.grantsalert.com](http://www.grantsalert.com) – sign up for email updates, or search the site's extensive database of grants

[www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/2educat.htm](http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/2educat.htm) – list of grants and links developed by a library

[www.publiceducation.org](http://www.publiceducation.org) – sign up for the weekly Newsblast, which includes information about deadline and ongoing grants as well as general education headlines and news clips

[www.schoolgrants.org](http://www.schoolgrants.org) – list of grants as well as other information about grant writing and sample proposals



## Appendix A – List of Grant Sources, Cont.



### Individual Organizations that Fund Grants

American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics – <http://www.aiaa.org/content.cfm?pageid=216>

Captain Planet Foundation – <http://www.captainplanetfdn.org>

CIBA Exemplary Science Teaching Award – <http://www.nsta.org/cibateacher>

DCAT “Making a Difference Award” – <http://www.nsta.org/dcat>

Delta Education/CPO Science Awards – <http://www.nsta.org/deltacpo>

Environmental Protection Agency – <http://www.epa.gov/enviroed/grants.html>

HP Technology for Teaching Award – [www.hp.com/hpinfo/grants/us/programs/tech\\_teaching](http://www.hp.com/hpinfo/grants/us/programs/tech_teaching)

ING Unsung Heroes – <http://www.ing-usa.com/us/about/ING/CorporateCitizenship/Education/INGUnsungHeroes/index.htm>

Intergraph Education Grant – <http://www.intergraph.com/education/grant.aspx>

Melinda Gray Ardia Environmental Education Foundation – <http://www.mgaef.org/grants.html>

Print Art Education Program – <https://www.lexmark.com/US/PrintArt/Signup>

PSEG Environmental Education Grants – <http://www.pseg.com/community/grants.jsp>

SeaWorld Outstanding Environmental Science Educator Award – <http://www.nsta.org/seaworld>

Shell Science Teaching Award – <http://www.nsta.org/shell>

Teaching Tolerance Grant Program – <http://www.tolerance.org/teach/grants/guide.jsp>

Toshiba America Foundation – <http://www.toshiba.com/taf/>

Toyota Tapestry Grant – <http://www.nsta.org/programs/tapestry/>

Vernier Technology Awards – <http://www.nsta.org/vernier>