



Fellowship Applications 101: Proposal Writing Workshop

Fellowship Proposals

Most applications require a statement from you.

- There are many components in an application, all of which work together.
- This is the single most important part of your application.
- It is the only part over which you have complete control.
- A great transcript or resume will not compensate for a poor essay.

Statements may take many forms.

- Personal statements are essays about you.
- Project proposals are essays about projects and their efficacy or impact.
- Study proposals are essays about what you want to study, your preparation, and the advantages of your institution.

Fellowship proposals have common denominators.

- Fundamentally, they are exercises in expository writing.
- As importantly, they are also exercises in persuasive writing.
- The persuasive element is convincing a committee to invest in you.
- Writing is an art, not a science.

First Steps

The fellowship application process requires:

- Self-assessment
- Research into fellowship opportunities and project development
- Presenting yourself in writing to selection committees

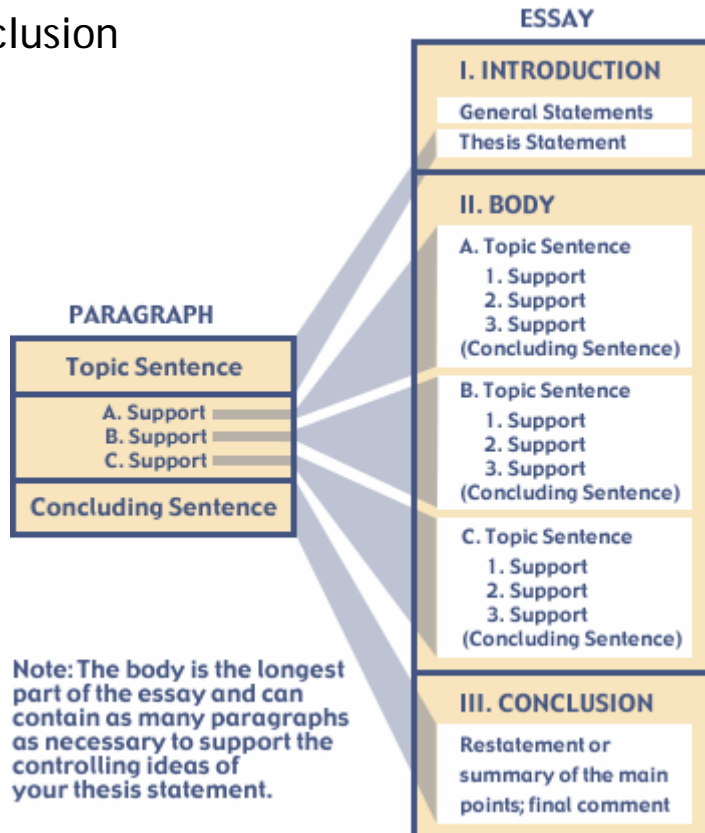
Writing the proposal follows the same scheme:

- Know yourself and why you are applying.
- Understand the essay topic.
- How will you demonstrate the match between you and a particular fellowship?
- How will you demonstrate the match between you and a particular project?
- What elements will you draw on to be persuasive?

Expository Writing Basics

Every essay has three essential components:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion



Tips

To write a good proposal:

- Know your audience (from the fellowship description), and write accordingly.
- Structure your essay to help your reader.
- Be as clear as you can be about what you hope to do, and how you might go about it.
- Set realistic goals and expectations.
- Show how your project is appropriate for the fellowship, and include relevant experience.
- Project a convergence between yourself, the fellowship experience proposed, and future goals.
- Be sincere and enthusiastic without being gushy.
- Demonstrate vs. claim.
- Be prepared to write many drafts, and get feedback throughout the writing process.

Common pitfalls:

- Writing to impress rather than to make a case based on ideas and information
- Confusing length with quality
- Confusing academic or jargon-filled prose with clear, succinct, quality prose
- Aiming for something overly ambitious
- Believing you can do this overnight

Final Thoughts:

- None of this is meant to be prescriptive as to formula.
- Be yourself—but be your best self.
- Enjoy the process!