



# Quickstart:

## Preparing Your Proposal

for the

### HTCC Research Conference at UCI

Here's a **one-page summary** for you.

Skip to the next section—"Tips for Writing a Proposal"—for the complete explanation.

#### THE PROPOSAL ABSTRACT

- What's a *Proposal Abstract*? It's a summary of your presentation—research or performance.
- How long should it be? Write about **100 words** summarizing what you did—or *propose* to do—for your presentation. Describe enough so the conference committee can know your plan.
- What should a *research* proposal contain? *State the problem, issue or area*; state your *hypothesis*; describe the *investigation* you will conduct to test your hypothesis; and state your *conclusion*. If you have already completed your research and know your *thesis*, state it.
- What should a *performance* (art, dance, music, drama, poetry reading) contain? State your theme, the idea you wish to convey to the audience. Specify if you need special space or equipment.
- For essential advice in writing your Proposal Abstract, go to [Information, Registration](#) and click on [Tips for Writing a Proposal](#). Read it, then click on [Publishing Your Abstract](#). Skip the section "Getting Past the Gatekeeper" for now, but check out the tips and requirements in the other ones.

#### THE PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

- For the conference program, craft an intriguing *Proposal Description* of about 25 words—a crisp sentence or fragment that amplifies your title by describing the *essence* of your presentation. Write clearly: this is your big chance to attract conference attendees deciding whether to come hear *you!*

#### THE APPLICATION FORM

- On the online Application/Registration Form, indicate the subject *category* in which you would like your presentation included.
- Identify *equipment* you will need. All the rooms have overhead projectors, boards (white or green) and podiums. But let us know if you need slide projectors, TV/VCR/DVD or sound-playing equipment, a microphone, special lighting, etc. To use PowerPoint—and we *don't* encourage it—you *must bring your own laptop and three-lens projector*.
- If proposing a *panel* presentation, list the names of the other presenters.

#### GETTING APPROVAL

- Give your *honors mentor professor*—electronically *and* on paper—the 100-word *Proposal Abstract* plus your 25-word *Proposal Description*. Ask your mentor for his or her comments.
- *Make improvements*. Heed your mentor: check facts, tighten organization, clarify diction.
- Show your *mentor* your completed "Registration and Application Form" with the revised drafts of your 25-word *Proposal Description* and 100-word *Proposal Abstract*.
- After both your mentor and the *honors director* have approved your *Proposal Description* and *Proposal Abstract*, place them in the appropriate windows on the "Registration and Application Form," then *submit the form electronically*—no later than **the first Thursday in December**.

For a more detailed explanation  
with examples of Proposal Descriptions & Abstracts, see the following pages.



# Tips for Writing a Proposal

## for the HTCC Research Conference at UCI

Your proposal summarizes the main components of your presentation for your honors director and the conference committee. Here is what you need to do.

### WHAT IT IS

- First of all, *relax*. This is not an exam, and it will likely turn out to be fun for you. Your mentors want to see you succeed. They will read with a kindly eye, and if they feel your proposal comes up short, they will give you suggestions for strengthening it so it can be accepted.
- You do not need to have your project or paper completed before you submit a proposal. What you *do* need—and this is standard practice in the academic world—is a clear statement of where your project is heading and what results or conclusions you expect to draw from it.
- Your Proposal Abstract is a summary of your research presentation. It is brief—*about* the total number of words in the two points above (107 words). But do give an exact overview of your presentation, including major components and key words. Write in such a way that an educated person who is not in your field (e.g. biology, chemistry, history) can grasp what you have attempted and what you have concluded.

### THE PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION and ABSTRACT

- Write a *Proposal Description*. This is a concise sentence or fragment distilling, in *about 25 words* or fewer, the *essence* of your presentation. It sketches key elements (of content, method or format) not covered in your title, describing your presentation for conference attendees. Along with your title, it is all people will read about your work. So write thoughtfully: it can help you build your audience.
- For your *Proposal Abstract* write *approximately 100 words* summarizing what you did—or *propose* to do—for your presentation. (See the first part of [Publishing Your Abstract](#) [at [Information Registration](#)] for a definition of an abstract as well as tips about structuring it.)
- If your presentation is a traditional research paper, (a) *state the problem, issue or area* you will investigate or have investigated, (b) state your *hypothesis*, (c) describe the *investigation* you will conduct (or have conducted) to test your hypothesis, and (d) state your *conclusion*.
- The conclusion you arrive at—your *main point* or *finding*, or your *interpretation* of its *significance*—is your *thesis*. If you have already completed your research and know your thesis, state it clearly and succinctly, supporting it with appropriate factual evidence and cogent reasoning. Otherwise your hypothesis will do just fine.
- Include a sentence or two about your *methodology*—perhaps an observation regarding its theoretical assumptions or implications, or a comment about its potentials and limitations. How did your methods affect your results?
- Follow *MLA conventions* for cybernetic and print sources. Your *writing* will no doubt be fresh, fascinating, uniquely your own; but your *documentation* should be conventional.  
NB: You can *review MLA conventions* at: [english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/](http://english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/).
- Include a *Works Cited* (or *Works Consulted*) section, precisely following MLA conventions. (This section will not figure in the 100-word requirement.)
- Write a concise, interesting *title* that accurately predicts your content.
- Proofread—meticulously!

**NB:** See [Tips for Writing Abstracts](#) to receive further guidance in writing your pre-conference Proposal Abstract(s). *Don't miss this:* it will give you essential advice. It will help you now in writing your Proposal Abstract, and *later* when you prepare an *optional* 250-word revision of your abstract that is due *after* the conference. Just skip (for the time being!) the section "Getting Past the Gatekeeper" and study the hints and requirements in the other sections.

## THE APPLICATION FORM

- On the online Application/Registration Form, indicate the *category* in which you would like to see your presentation placed. Doing so will help us organize the conference with certain academic disciplines in mind.
- Identify any special *equipment* you will need. All the rooms have overhead projectors, boards (white or green) and podiums, so you do not need to request those. But do let us know if you need slide projectors, TV/VCR/DVD or sound-playing equipment, a microphone, special lighting, etc. If you believe that a *visually arresting* PowerPoint production will *significantly* enhance your presentation, then **bring your own laptop and three-lens projector**—and have a *back-up plan* in case of equipment failure, which occurs all too often! Your honors director can probably arrange for the loan of these from your school Audio/Visual Department or Instructional Materials Service.
- If you're proposing a *panel* presentation, list the names of the other presenters. (If you do not include them, they will not appear in the program.) Then mention what is new or interesting or relevant in what you have to say (e.g. honors fund-raising activities we have found successful, or recent studies of global warming or new perspectives on Thoreau's *Walden*.)
- If you're proposing an *artistic* presentation (visual art, dance, music, dramatic enactment, prose or poetry reading), state your theme, the idea you wish to convey to the audience by your performance. Be sure to specify if you need special space or equipment (e.g. easels for drawings, smooth dance floor, stage for eight actors, etc.).

## APPROVAL

- Submit to your *honors mentor*—electronically *and* on paper—your 100-word ***Proposal Abstract*** with your 25-word ***Proposal Description***. Ask your mentor professor for his or her comments.
- Allow enough time to *make improvements* inspired by your mentor's high standards and sage advice. Please use ragged right margins, as you see on this page; do not justify them.
- ***Double-check*** your *facts*; be scrupulously accurate when imparting information, defining, quoting or paraphrasing. Re-check the accuracy of information about your *sources* as well. And ***re-proof!***
- ***Follow MLA format***. See <<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>> to check MLA conventions. If you cite longer works, we prefer they be *italicized* rather than underlined. Other than that variation, please follow MLA conventions if you refer to other sources within your text (and, if you later seek to publish, in your Works Cited or Works Consulted section).
- ***Review HTCC requirements***. "To Boost Your Chance of Being Published" and "How to Avoid Irritating an Irascible Editor" in "[Tips for Writing Abstracts](#)." Please be considerate: deviations from format standards distract, irk and waste the time of our busy screening committee—and detract from your content. So: be creative in your *thinking*, but do observe the conventions!
- Finally, show your honors mentor your completed "Registration and Application Form" with the improved, final drafts of your 25-word *Proposal Description* and your 100-word *Proposal Abstract*. He or she will review these drafts and either return them to you for further revision or give them to the honors director.
- When both your honors mentor and *honors director* have approved your *Proposal Description* and *Proposal Abstract*, place the two items in their proper windows on the [Registration and Application Form](#), then submit the form electronically—no later than **the first Friday in December**.
- We suggest that you invite your honors mentor professor and honors director to come to the conference with you. Many honors programs will pay professors' registration fees and other expenses.

**For examples of Proposal Descriptions and Publication Abstracts, see the next pages.**

# SAMPLE PROPOSAL DESCRIPTIONS and ABSTRACTS

## Three Proposal Descriptions

College	Presenter	Title and Description
Rio Hondo College	Babanpal Singh	<b>Outsourcing: The Technological Shift of the 21st Century.</b> Causes, consequences, and possible solutions for the outsourcing of white-collar human jobs from developed nations to developing countries. (18 words)
Mt. San Antonio College	SMALL GROUP: Mauricio Fuentes and Joyce Low	<b>Functions and Dysfunctions of Globalization.</b> Globalization affects ethnic relations around the world. Economic influences increase the gap between haves and have-nots. (16 words)
Golden West College	PANEL: Sarah Blanchette, Stephanie Johnson and Triana Rosas	<b>“Letter from Birmingham Jail”: An Exercise in Experiential Learning.</b> Reconstruction of a spirited town hall meeting. We invite audience participation in a lively role-playing debate arguing civil rights issues raised in Martin Luther King’s famous letter. (27 words)

## Three Proposal Abstracts

### Outsourcing: The Technological Shift of the 21st Century.

Outsourcing means having one or more components provided externally, by a source outside the firm selling the final product. The desire of businesses to reduce costs, plus the non-availability of skilled labor, has resulted in the outsourcing of jobs to places offering skilled labor at a low cost. It has led to increased profits of businesses, ending economic recessions for developed countries. In addition, it has increased jobs and strengthened the economies of developing countries. However, it has also led to job loss in developed countries, and has created stressful working conditions in the outsourcing centers of developing countries. (100 words)

### Functions and Dysfunctions of Globalization

The functions and dysfunctions of globalization define ethnic relations around the world. Influences from different countries can be seen in the architecture, cuisine, fashion, and other aspects of Europe and the United States. As the world has progressed and changed, people have become more connected through technology. Communication and trade have revolutionized the world in ways never thought possible. While globalization has undoubtedly brought a great boon to humanity, it has also caused considerable problems. Economic, cultural, and political factors increase the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged. Exploitation of poorer countries also perpetuates the current strain between race relations. (101 words)

### “Letter from Birmingham Jail”: An Exercise in Experiential Learning

This project explores major issues Martin Luther King, Jr. raised in “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” First we will divide our audience into three segments, distributing to each person a summary of three positions: King’s advocacy of non-violent protest, the radical approach of Malcolm X, and the views of the white moderates. After allowing time for preparation, we will conduct an imaginary town hall meeting, with each segment arguing the position it has been assigned.

By considering many facets of the issue, participants will re-live the pressures King faced, gaining an experiential understanding of the cross-currents involved in his thinking within the context of his time. (105 words)

## COMPETITION ABSTRACTS

In addition to the Proposal Description and Proposal Abstract mentioned above, you may wish to compete for a scholarship by writing a Competition Abstract.

Conference scholarships are described on our HTCC Website at [Conference Awards](#). They include the [Director’s Award](#) (400 words), the [Outstanding Abstract Award](#) (400 words), and the [UCI Research Grant](#) (400 words). If you wish to compete for one or more of these scholarships—and we encourage you to do so—expand your Proposal Abstract and follow the directions on our Website under [Conference Awards](#) (at [Information, Registration](#)). Please see the expanded format sample on the next page.

The [Poster Awards](#) do not require an expanded abstract. Instead, click on [Posters](#) (at [Information, Registration](#)) and follow the guidelines.

You may also wish to strive for a Student Excellence Scholarship (500 words). Read about it on our Website. Click [Awards and Scholarships](#), then [HTCC Exemplary Achievement Scholarships](#). Note that it requires an essay based not on your conference presentation, but on your achievements as an honors student.

## Sample Competition Abstract

This abstract, competing for the Director's Award, won an Outstanding Abstract Award. The epigraph is optional; otherwise please *follow this format*.

**"Letter from Birmingham Jail: An Exercise in Experiential Learning, 406 words**

**Presenter:** Sarah Blanchette, Golden West College

**Mentor:** Professor Charles Whitchurch

*"For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest."  
—Martin Luther King, Jr*

Martin Luther King, Jr. helped set the framework: abolishing segregation, galvanizing the civil rights movement, mobilizing a nation into fruitful action against civic injustice. Yet despite the landmark victories, we still struggle with civil rights issues today. How are we to progress toward a world of acceptance—not only an attitude of tolerance, but a welcoming of all races, however different, without first recognizing what King and his contemporaries confronted?

Our presentation takes the form of a town hall meeting, dividing the audience into three segments and distributing to every participant a summary of each position: King's advocacy of non-violent protest, the more radical approach of Malcolm X, and the views of the clergy and white moderates. All sides will have an equal voice within the debate. After allowing time for preparation, we conduct an imaginary town hall meeting, with each segment arguing the position it has been assigned.

Though the role-playing may be somewhat restricted by our participants' limited knowledge of the concrete details of the context within which the issue of segregation *vs.* integration was so fervently argued, many relevant points and insights will emerge as the discussion ensues. We should see that King's strategy—using the art of non-violence and compromise as stepping-stones toward the ultimate goal—proved more efficacious in achieving concrete reforms. By framing the debate around the central issues King raised in his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," we provide a strong platform for what can be a politically and racially charged discussion. Because they will consider many facets of the issue, participants will re-live—as opposed to read about—the pressures King faced, gaining a more experiential understanding of the cross-currents involved in his thinking within the context of his time.

How much oppression and hardship had to be endured before the pivotal affirmation that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" rang through a generation fighting for equality so effectively that legislation—with concrete changes—followed? Through this exercise we will see how King and his adherents served not merely as "a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion," but as "a thermostat that transformed the mores of society." This debate will generate a heightened awareness of leadership, rhetoric, ethics and history that enhances our understanding of both past and present. This knowledge will aid us in the decisions we make in our own lives: decisions by which we define ourselves, and, perhaps, the character of our country. (406 words)

### Works Consulted

King, Martin Luther, Jr., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* Ed. Clayborne Carson. New York: Warner Books, 1998.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail." *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Signet, 1964.

Perry, Bruce. *Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America*. New York: Station Hill Press, 1991.

To view a [Publication Abstract](#), see the next page.

## Sample Publication Abstract

If you hope to see your work published in UCI's *Building Bridges*, after the conference revise your abstract to summarize (in about 250 words) your presentation. Epigraphs are optional. Otherwise, as regards documentation, spacing, indenting, boldfacing and italics (instead of underlining book titles) please follow *exactly* the format below.

**"Letter from Birmingham Jail": An Exercise in Experiential Learning, 288 words**

**Presenter:** Sarah Blanchette, Golden West College

**Mentor:** Professor Charles Whitchurch

*"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."  
—Martin Luther King Jr., Strength to Love, 1963*

Despite the victories of Martin Luther King, Jr., we still struggle with civil rights issues today. How are we to progress toward a world of acceptance—not only an attitude of tolerance, but a true welcoming of all races, without first recognizing what King and his contemporaries confronted?

To address these critical questions we structured our presentation after an imaginary town hall meeting set in 1965. We divided the audience into three segments and distributed to each participant a summary of each position: King's advocacy of non-violent protest, Malcolm X's "violent revolution," the views of the clergy/white moderates, and the points of the white racists (Perry 280). All sides had an equal voice within the debate, with each faction arguing the position it had been assigned.

Though the role-playing was limited by the amount of concrete details we could provide within the allotted time, the issue of segregation vs integration was so fervently argued that many relevant insights emerged. We saw that King's strategy—using the art of non-violence and compromise—proved more efficacious in achieving concrete reforms. In addressing central issues King raised in his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail," we provided an opportunity for a heated, politically charged discussion.

Because we considered several facets of the issue, participants re-lived—as opposed to merely reading about—the pressures King faced, thus gaining a more experiential understanding of the cross-currents involved in his thinking. We witnessed the pivotal affirmation that "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere" (King, "Letter"), which rang through a generation fighting for equality so effectively that legislation followed—bringing concrete changes (King, *Autobiography* 189). This high-energy debate generated among participants a heightened awareness of leadership, rhetoric, ethics and history that enhanced our understanding of past and present. (288 words)

### Works Cited and Consulted

King, Martin Luther Jr., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King Jr.* Ed. Clayborne Carson. New York: Warner Books, 1998.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail." 16 Apr. 1963. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Signet, 1964. [Historical Text Archive](http://www.historicaltextarchive.com). Donald J. Mabry. 2001. 2 May 2005 <[historicaltextarchive.com/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=40](http://historicaltextarchive.com/sections.php?op=viewarticle&artid=40)>.

Perry, Bruce. *Malcolm: The Life of a Man Who Changed Black America*. New York: Station Hill Press, 1991.

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For additional examples of Publication Abstracts from *Building Bridges*, see [Sample Abstracts](#) on [Information, Registration](#).