(2) How you are doing it ; (3) Why it is significant . It's even a good idea to open the proposal with a lively summary paragraph that answers all three of these questions directly. Projects that facilitate direct presentation of this vital information are often organized around a clear, overarching research question. Rather than explain your project in terms of a topic or even a thesis, you can focus your presentation around the major research questions you are asking, how you plan to answer them, and what contribution your project will make to fields of kno wledge. You do not need to know what you will argue in the final product before you get the grant. Indeed, some committees will worry that research is too "thesis - driven" if the researcher knows what he or she wants to argue before the research is complete d. Thus, avoid language such as "I will argue"; instead, write "I will explore," or "I will test the proposition that." (If your project is nearing completion, assertions of your thesis are more acceptable.) Your statements on the significance of your proj ect are very important. Don't depend on your recommenders to do this for you. Explain what interventions your project makes in ongoing debates in your immediate field, and then what larger contributions it will make to scholarly and/or humanistic knowledge . Here is where it

helps to think big . Communicate in a lively and interesting way what's at stake in your research. Why should anyone care about your project'? Can it pass the "so what?" test" What difference will it make? Don't assume the self - evident im

about your project, your belief in its importance and significance. If you try too hard to please everybody and avoid all controversy, your project runs the risk of sounding just boring.

Parts of a Grant Proposal

Different granting agencies often state explicitly what aspects of your project you should address in the proposal and/or what special emphases, topics, or themes they are looking for. Read and follow all specific instructions carefully. Avoid multiple submission of the same proposal to agencies that are looking for different kinds of things. Develop a basic proposal for your project and then adjust carefully as necessary. Address the specifics of the particular grant especially in introductory or concluding remarks. In addition, some agencies require supplementary statements, such as a narrative autobiography, an annotated bibliography, etc.

There is no standard format or organization for proposals. Different ways of presenting your project can be equally effective. Sub-headings (e.g., description; rationale or significance; methodology; chapter outline; schedule of research) can offer effective "signposts" and facilitate rapid comprehension. Clear, strong, direct topics sentences for all paragraphs can be equally effective. A summary introduction of the whole project -- including such specifics as authors, texts, archives, and necessary contexts -- makes an effective beginning. Quick and to the point is better, in most cases, than elaborately long introductions based on a narrative, details for a text, and so forth. After the introduction, the order of parts often varies, but proposals tend to include a description of the project, a statement about its necessity or contribution, a chapter outline; and a schedule of research. These sections need to be specific, indicating, for example, what primary and secondary materials you are working with, archives or special collections you need to consult, related scholarly literature (often cited in parenthetical style), and so forth.

If the project is a revision of a dissertation, explain what substantive new research and/or conceptual reorientation is planned. (Granting agencies are frequently reluctant to fund stylistic revisions of dissertations.) If the project is an outgrowth of earlier work or a stepping stone in a multi-stage research program, such connections should be outlined briefly. Your proposal

the discussion of and voting on your proposal, let alone the institutional constraints that can come into play. In the end, the decision on your   proposal may have had little to do with the