* A research proposal is a written plan for conducting a research study.
* Developing a research proposal is important for numerous reasons:
  + A well-thought-out plan can save time and headaches later in the process.
  + It will save the researcher time in the long run.
  + It provides a detailed set of procedures for a research study.
  + It can provide a structure for writing a final research report.
  + It is often required for permission to conduct a study.
* Generally speaking, research proposals share some common elements, including an introduction section, a methodology section, and a proposed timeline for activities within the study.
* The introduction typically consists of a statement of the problem, purpose of the study, justification for the study, and specific research questions.
* The methodology section is one of the most important components of a proposal and consists of a description of the participants, a description of the research design, methods for data collection, and methods for data analysis.
* Quantitative research proposals are fairly structured, with specific components that must be addressed.
* A statement of the problem provides background information and a thorough description of the context in which the problem occurs.
* The purpose of the study clearly explains what the researcher is proposing to investigate.
* The justification or rationale for the study provides an opportunity for the researcher to explain why a given topic is important and worthy of investigation.
* Assumptions are assertions made by the researcher that are believed to be true, but not verifiable.
* A limitation is an aspect of a research study that is outside the researcher’s control, but may have an adverse effect on the outcome of the research.
* A delimitation is a restriction the researcher places on the study to limit its scope.
* Proposed timelines and budgets are often included in research proposals.
* Qualitative research proposals are much less structured and must contain an element of flexibility.
* Qualitative research proposals often benefit from conducting prior fieldwork.
* Titles are often added to qualitative research proposals to provide a context and frame of reference for the study, which is also often included as a separate subsection in the introduction.
* Due to the vast amounts of potential data, strategies for data management should also be included in qualitative research proposals.
* Qualitative researchers should also include a section addressing how they will establish the trustworthiness of their data and findings.
* Proposals for action research and mixed-methods studies often contain aspects particular to each type (i.e., qualitative and quantitative) proposals, as appropriate.