

## Tips on Writing a Proposal for the RBK and Sustainability in France Undergraduate Research Awards

### Tip 1

This is a short proposal: 225-500 words. This means that you want to make your sentences count—avoid generalities and fluff, and go directly to describing your project aims, the questions you’re asking, the significance or stakes of your project, and how you expect to accomplish and present your research or creative work.

### Tip 2

Give a sense of the kinds of questions your research or creative project asks or addresses. You don’t need the answers—you haven’t done the research yet—but try to articulate some pertinent, exciting, concrete questions. Example: “This project examines representations of gender-based violence in 19<sup>th</sup>-century French-language periodicals. How frequent were visual depictions of gender-based violence in these periodicals? What kinds of public and private violence appears in these illustrations? What is the relationship between allegorical figures and violence in this visual media?” Asking questions is also a way to engage your readers (the selection committee) in your project. You might think of this as a kind of scientific hypothesis that, if you are funded, you will “test out” with evidence. If you plan to do an ethnography or study of people’s responses or attitudes, what will you be asking the people you talk to?

### Tip 3

Identify your corpus (or creative media) as much as possible: what are your primary sources? What texts/documents/linguistic corpus/visual media/films/video/songs/art/objects will you be analyzing and interpreting?

### Tip 4

Identify your critical or theoretical approach, if possible or applicable to your project: Is this a gender studies project? Are you drawing on queer theory or critical race theory or postcolonial theory? Are you taking a media studies or environmental humanities approach? Don’t worry—the proposal is not a place to be super theoretical—but if you are using a specific critical or theoretical framework in your project, let us know.

### Tip 5

How does your project engage with literary or cultural production in French or with the French language or with French-speaking world regions or France? Make sure that your proposal makes this clear.

### Tip 6

How are you going to do whatever it is you are planning on doing? In other words, what’s your methodology? Are you going to analyze films? Compare text and image? Conduct interviews or fieldwork?

### Tip 7

What are you going to produce—what format and media will you share your research or creative work in? Webpage? Video? Short story? Thesis chapter? Paper? Critical edition of a literary text? Specify this as concretely as possible—but be realistic.