

A Sample Informal Proposal

Below you will find a sample proposal asking for new pencil sharpeners for a small private grade school. After each section, we'll provide a commentary to explain how what has been written works as part of a proposal.

The Header

To: Rev. Mark Smith

From: Nicole Johnson

Date: March 10, 2011

Subject: A proposal to purchase new pencil sharpeners for the classrooms of St. Mary's School

Purpose

I write this letter to propose a solution to a recurring problem at St. Mary's School. The problem is that the pencil sharpeners in the classrooms are very old and do not work effectively anymore. Students and teachers continually become frustrated because it is difficult to sharpen a pencil with the current sharpeners, and pencils that are sharp are crucial for effective learning.

I suggest that we order new pencil sharpeners for each classroom so that the students will have pencils that work well and will therefore be able to write without the frustration of worn down pencil points.

- **Commentary On the Purpose:** Because the audience is the pastor of a church that has a grade school, and because the pastor is not using the classrooms in the school every day, he may not know how bad the pencil sharpeners are. Thus, the problem is stated clearly at the beginning in the purpose section of the proposal

Problem of Ineffective Pencil Sharpeners

There are 217 students enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade at St. Mary's School. These students occupy 12 classrooms each day. None of these classrooms has a pencil sharpener that works well; it takes several minutes to sharpen just one pencil.

This means that if all of the students need to sharpen their pencils once a day (depending on how much writing is being done, a pencil may need sharpened more than once a day), it could take an average of thirty minutes to sharpen them all before the students can sit down to their desks and start learning the day's lessons. Thirty minutes of time spent sharpening pencils takes away a great deal from instructional time.

However, not all the students need to sharpen their pencils at the same time. This need arises at various times throughout the day, often at the beginning of a test or a new lesson.

Because of the length of time it takes to sharpen a pencil, the teachers have continuous interruptions in their lessons throughout the day. Almost everything done in a classroom requires a pencil, especially as students get older, and it is difficult to get anything done without this basic tool.

The current pencil sharpeners have been in the classrooms as long as Mrs. Morris has taught here, and that is over thirty years. They do not work well because they have been in use for so long. Even after sharpening for several minutes, the pencil points still are not as sharp as they should be, and the points break off easily, causing them to need to be sharpened yet again.

- **Commentary on the description of the problem:** In this section, the proposal gives more details and background information about the kinds of problems caused by not having effective pencil sharpeners in hopes that the pastor will realize the degree to which the poor sharpeners detract from student learning.

Solution to the Problem

I propose that we purchase electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom. These work quickly and effectively, and take only a few seconds to sharpen a pencil.

Office World carries several pencil sharpeners designed specifically for schools and the high volume of use the sharpeners get in classrooms.

I propose we purchase 12 of the Used-All-Day Pro Student Electric Pencil Sharpeners. These sharpeners have received strong reviews on the Office World web site. In addition, Central Elementary School purchased these for all their classrooms four years ago, and their principal has told me how well they still work.

- **Commentary on the solution:** The goal of this section is to convince the pastor that acting on the proposed solution will reap immediate benefits in the classroom. The proposal is specific in the solution; it does not suggest purchasing just any pencil sharpeners, but specific ones that have been researched. It also includes the recommendation of a friend who is a principal at another school to show that other people say this solution works well for them.

Costs

The Used-All-Day Pro Student Electric Pencil Sharpeners cost \$42.29 each. However, Office World gives a discount if purchasing ten or more, reducing the cost to \$35.29 each. Because we are a member of the Office World Schools frequent shopper program, we will receive 2% of our purchase back at the end of the school year. This makes the total cost of the purchase \$415.01.

Several electric sharpeners exist that cost more and less than this one, but because of the recommendations of others, I believe that purchasing a middle-priced sharpener will be a wise choice for St. Mary's School. Because Office World offers free shipping for purchases over \$50, we will not have any shipping costs.

- **Commentary on costs:** In this section, the proposal shows exactly how much the purchase will cost. It also shows how the writer has not chosen the most or least expensive

sharpener, but one that is priced in the middle. The writer also spells out any additional financial benefits the school will receive by making this purchase.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I think purchasing new electric pencil sharpeners for each classroom would be of tremendous benefit to St. Mary's School. It would put an end to the constant frustration of students never being able to find sharp pencils, and of losing instructional time because of the length of time it takes to use our current sharpeners.

Thank you for considering making this purchase for our teachers and students!

- **Commentary on Conclusion:** The conclusion restates the problem and the proposed solution, and ends on a positive note encouraging the reader to act on the proposal. As you can see, writing a proposal does not have to be an overwhelming task. With a bit of thought and research, you will be able to write an effective proposal that has a good chance of being approved.