In undergraduate subjects requiring a research proposal, the first main section is the Introduction, which gives the background to the topic, a summary of previous research results in the area that justifies the need for this study, definitions of key terms and the aim(s) and hypothesis(es). This is followed by the Method section where Participants, Materials and Procedures are outlined. Finally there is a reference list. If there is a survey this will be included in an Appendix at the end of the document.

In higher year levels, there may be in addition, an Abstract, Table of Contents, Objectives, a Timetable, and Costings in an Appendix. Postgraduate research proposals will follow specified formats.

**Title Page**

The title page needs to include a concise (usually not more than 12 words), title which clearly reflects the purpose of the study. Use APA6 formatting specific to title pages.

**Introduction**

This section should be about 250 words. It is separated into 3 small paragraphs:

1. The background to the study
   - Definitions to understand the background
   - State the aim of the proposed project

2. Explain how the knowledge of the area of study has developed by comparing contrasting previous research (Literature Review).
   - Explain the gap(s) in knowledge and how this leads to the research question.
   - Outline briefly how methodology to be used to answer the research question(s)

3. This is a key paragraph for justifying your proposal. You should make and justify predictions of the results you anticipate you will get. Here you need to employ your inquiry/research, creative problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. These predictions are the hypotheses.

**Method**

The entire Method section should be about 150 words.

In this section you should describe in future tense how the study will be conducted (e.g. ‘I will examine’...data will be used to...’ etc.) The reader should also be able to evaluate the appropriateness of your methods for testing your proposed hypotheses. The Method section has three parts beginning with the ‘Participants’ sub-heading, followed by ‘Materials’ and ‘Procedure’.
Participants
Describe how many participants will be in the study and how they will be recruited.

Materials
Describe briefly any materials to be used. These could be registered or original questionnaires, stopwatches or computer programs but not trivial or unnecessary details like pens to complete a questionnaire.

Procedure
Briefly describe the procedures to be used in the study in chronological order. Explain what the participants will do in the order they will do them.

References
In order to give credit for the ideas and findings of others, you need to include both in-text references and a reference list in your report. All work cited in the report must include the full reference in the reference list. Conversely, each entry in the reference list must be cited in text. It is very important to follow APA6 referencing guidelines very carefully.

For detailed guidelines on APA referencing (including information about DOIs), go to the Academic Referencing Tools, available through the La Trobe Library Webpage - http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/referencing-tool/apa-6 as well as the Achieve@Uni Module: Using Sources in your Writing – ‘Science and technology’.

Appendix
(‘Appendices’ if you have more than one)

The appendix is where you put information that is too detailed to go in the main body of the report. The types of material that go in the proposal’s appendix could include survey questions, and letters of recruitment.