Content of a proposal for a thesis or any research project

Every proposal for thesis or any other research **must** have the following as to content:

1. **Title**
2. **Purpose:** Statement about the general **problem addressed.** This specifies the topic or area of work. It sets the stage for broadly identifying the area of research and the problems encountered in that area.
3. **Justification:** An explanation of the **significance** of this area of inquiry.
4. **Previous work: a review of the most pertinent literature, works or achievements related to the problem at hand. This can include a few general works and a few significant applications or research studies. This can be a sample of the relevant literature, stated as an indication of what will be extended.**
5. **Theory or model:** any theoretical background that will be used or may apply to the investigation of the problem in this study. Or if there is no applicable theory, any model(s) that may be applicable. This can be extracted from the literature and modified as necessary. It can also be said that this is the starting model and will be modified after the investigation, thus development of a model can be one of the research objectives.
6. **Research objectives:** the specific issues addressed in the framework of this problem. This can be in terms of either questions (ending with a "?"), statements of specific issues, or hypotheses that will be tested. For each research question there will be also a methodology and at the end of research a set of findings or answers with discussion. Purpose is general. Objectives are specific and directly connected with what is planned to be done.
7. **Methodology:** methods and procedures to be used for each research question. These methods may include survey of literature on basis of which models may be developed or extended; collection and synthesis of data; surveys of given populations or institutions; observation of practices or behaviors; experiments; etc. Social science, ethnographic, systems, historical, political science and other methodologies can be used.
8. **Analysis:** methods and procedures used in analysis and synthesis of gathered data data. This may be subsumed under methodology in general.
9. **Expectation:** a projection of results or achievements as the results of the proposed research. This can be short and general.

Summary: This can be summarized in questions to be answered in each section:
1. What do you **call** this investigation?
2. What **problem** or area will you investigate in general?
3. Why is this problem **important** to investigate?
4. What was **previously done** in relation to this problem? What were some of the significant studies?
5. What theory or model is going to guide your research?
6. What will you **specifically** investigate or do in the framework of that problem? What are your specific research questions or hypotheses?
7. How will each research question be **addressed**?
8. How will the results be **analyzed**?
9. What are the **deliverables**? What can or will be gained by investigation of this problem?

Organization: It is not necessary to follow exactly this order, but it is important that **all** of these points be clearly and directly addressed. For instance, it is usual to have the problem

statement in the introduction. This can be followed by research objectives, and then other points, rather then following the order above.

Starting: To start developing the proposal in your own mind and on paper it is best first to state clearly the problem and research questions, and as necessary restate them as you go along. The process of developing a proposal is not linear but reiterative, with a lot of feedback loops. Start with concentrating on questions 2 and 6.

Extensions: This list may be modified for organization and writing of papers presenting results of research or for papers critically reviewing works related to a research topic or an area of scholarly studies.