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Rhetorical Triangle Analysis Assignment

The purpose of my proposal is to seek approval for a funded research project. The research project will determine if a research method which was originally designed for a single case study can be applied more generally to genealogical research on 19th century Irish immigrants to Philadelphia. This research method demonstrated that even with a minimum of information an extended family network could be discovered through using sources of data including: DNA databases belonging to [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), parish records, cemetery records, and census returns.

A common problem genealogists encounter when researching extended family networks is difficulty in determining whether a viable candidate belongs to the family or not. This proposal suggests utilizing the case study method to solve this problem.

Identified audience

Because the proposal will be focused on genealogical research concerned with 19th century Irish immigration to the City of Philadelphia from County Derry, Ireland, it will be relevant to persons or institutions already interested in this subject and where a knowledge gap in this field of study has been identified.

My proposal will meet the needs of multiple audiences. These audiences are: the professional genealogist and the family history researcher. While the proposal is intended for the

professional genealogist, anyone with an interest in family history or a background in genealogy will be able to read the proposal and benefit from it.

My writing will be primarily focused on the audience of professional genealogists because the proposal will be submitted to a historical society, or to an academic or governmental institution. For this reason, the proposal will be written in an academic style. However, individuals other than recipients of the proposal will be able to read the proposal and, hopefully, gain insights into the potential impact of the research.

The professional genealogist is a person who is paid for research based on his or her skills. They may work in a variety of settings including historical societies, libraries, or work independently. No professional certification is required, but affiliation with a society such as the Association for Professional Genealogists is often held. In addition, persons belonging to this audience group may include persons from related fields that may involve genealogical research.

The family historian is a person who typically uses a service such as [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) for his or her research in a non-professional capacity. The family historian is an amateur, usually self-taught, who may possess varying degrees of proficiency.

Technical Writing for Success (36-37) explains how the writer can meet the needs of multiple audiences by using a strategy which divides the audience into two groups - the primary and the secondary audience. My proposal will be accessible to both groups because I am writing different parts of the proposal for each group.

The proposal will include general information appropriate for the lay reader as well as more technical information geared toward the professional genealogist, who is an expert. Some of the more detailed information concerning how the research project will be conducted may only

be of interest to professional genealogists.

The primary audience will likely read the entire proposal and will take action based on the request for a research project. They will have the expertise and knowledge to assess, judge and interpret the proposal as part of the decision-making process.

The secondary audience, the family historian, will likely read selected portions of the proposal since these may be appropriate for those who are merely interested in the information contained within. They may also choose to use the information in the proposal for themselves - for example, applying it their own research.

Audience Characteristics

Knowledge Level

While the proposal is intended for the professional genealogist who will be making a decision to approve a funded research project, persons at any knowledge level, whether they are a lay reader and or an expert, can understand the proposal.

For the primary audience, the knowledge level of the subject area and research methods will range from moderate to high. Those with a moderate level of knowledge will be individuals who are unfamiliar with some of the record collections. But, by and large, this audience will possess a high level of knowledge of sources, records, and research methods because of their training and expertise.

For the secondary audience, the knowledge level of the subject area and research methods can range from basic to expert because family historians range from beginners to highly skilled. The beginner may not have much knowledge of the subject and merely want to learn more having only begun to investigate his family origins. The highly skilled researcher may want to utilize the

more technical sections of the proposal for his or her own research.

The proposal will include a section which describes general information on tracing ancestors from Ireland who emigrated to Philadelphia in the 19th century. Examples from the case study will be provided that are simple enough for the amateur researcher and that are able to be understood by the lay reader.

Demographics

Demographics such as age, sex, and income are relevant to my proposal. The demographics of the each audience group will vary to some extent.

In terms of age, I expect the primary audience to be above 21 years of age having obtained a college degree or specialized training or certification plus experience, while the secondary audience may include persons younger than 21 because family history research does not require special education, knowledge or training.

Because the subject matter appeals to both sexes, I would expect that both audiences will have a fairly equal number of males and females.

In terms of education, I would expect the primary audience to have an advanced level of education. The professional genealogist will also have some years of experience in the field.

The secondary audience will not necessarily have an advanced degree or specialized training because the family history researcher is an amateur who can start at the beginner's level of research with no prior knowledge.

The income level for the primary audience is expected to be in the middle to upper income brackets. For the secondary audience, the income level should vary more widely since family history researchers come from all walks of life. While my proposal is not written with any

income level in mind, the subject matter may attract certain income levels because of the requirement for leisure time necessary for such a pursuit/hobby.

Role

The role of the primary audience is to make a decision about whether to approve the proposed research project along with funding, The secondary audience does not have an assigned or expected role.

Because the multiple audiences have different goals, I will note this fact in the introduction to my proposal.

Cultural Background

Cultural background is another important characteristic of the proposal. The subject area of the proposal is not exclusionary to any cultural background and can be of interest to persons from all cultural backgrounds. However, persons familiar with this area of genealogical research or local Irish history in Philadelphia would have the highest level of interest. Persons with Irish ancestors could also be interested.

My writing will be adapted to include some supplementary explanations of events, history and records specific to Ireland or Irish-American culture in 19th century Philadelphia which may not be as well known to persons from other cultures.