[Insert Title of Project]

Authors: [Insert the full names of all group members here]
Date: [Insert the date the group turned in the proposal]

In this section, your team will <u>briefly</u> overview the results of the study. Think of this as a cheat sheet for people who do not have time to read the whole project but want to generally know what you found. This section should include:

- One or two sentences explaining the goal of the study
- The key findings of the study (that is, what patterns of content did your analysis reveal?)
- The key implications (that is, in just a few sentences, explain how your findings may affect people who read/watch this content)

In this section, your team will justify why you are studying the source material and topics that you have chosen for your content analysis. Think of this as persuading your readers that your study is an important one that they should read more about.

For each of the following subsections, be sure to:

- Write one to two well-researched paragraphs for each of the following subsections, clearly answering the
 question raised in the subsection.
- Cite (at minimum) two peer-reviewed, scholarly sources in each of the following three sections (for six peer-reviewed, scholarly sources total). One of the sources for each section should be a reading from the class syllabus and the other should be from outside of class.
- If applicable, cite any factual claims (e.g. voter turnout, viewership ratings) made in the paragraphs. These sources must be credible but do not need to be peer-reviewed, scholarly sources. They will not, however, count toward the required minimum scholarly references.
- Follow APA style guidelines when citing the sources
- Whenever possible, teams should <u>paraphrase</u> previous work
- IMPORTANT: Be sure to address <u>all</u> comments made on your proposal document.

Begin with a sentence introducing the content of the section.

[Heading identifying the source you are studying]

In this subsection, your team should answer the question: why is it important to study the content of [insert your source here (e.g. New York Times, Veep)]? Use previous academic research about news coverage, entertainment and politics, or campaign advertising to make your case.

[Heading identifying the first topic you are studying]

In this subsection, your team should answer the question: why is it important to study media portrayals of [insert your first topic here (e.g. politicians, Democrats/Republicans, journalists)]? Use previous academic research about your topic to make your case.

End the section by writing out your research question.



[Heading identifying the second topic you are studying]

In this subsection, your team should answer the question: why is it important to study media portrayals of [insert your second topic here (e.g. voters, immigrants, women/men)]? Use previous academic research about your topic to make your case.

End the section by writing out your research question.

FINDINGS

In this section, your team will overview the results of your content analysis. This section will include graphs and brief paragraphs describing the findings displayed in the graphs. Your team should include:

- A sentence transitioning to the findings section
- Then, for each code, (a) a sentence describing the percentage of your team's units of analysis that fit into each coding category and (b) a graph visualizing the findings for each code
- After overviewing results for each code, connect them back to your research questions. (e.g. "In response to RQ1, it appears that the New York Times covers the economy often, but not typically using a positive tone. In response to RQ2, ...").
- IMPORTANT: Be sure to address <u>all</u> comments made on your draft analysis document.

In this section, your team will speculate about the implications of your findings, tying back to <u>two</u> theories of media effects that we have covered in this class (two step flow, spiral of silence, cultivation, agenda setting, framing, priming, selective exposure/audience choice, etc.). Importantly, make sure that the implications you mention and the theories you chose <u>are related to your codes/findings</u>. This section should include the following:

A sentence transitioning from the findings to the implications section.

[Heading identifying the first theory your team is applying]

In this subsection, your team should identify one theory of media effects covered in this class that you think can shed light on possible effects of the patterns of coverage you found in your content analysis. The section should be about 2-3 paragraphs long, so address each point in a concise manner. Specifically:

- Clearly and accurately describe the general prediction(s) of the selected theory, as well as the components of the theory that are important for your project specifically,
- Given the predictions of the theory, speculate about what effects the content patterns your team found
 may have on people exposed to that content,
- Refer to your team's quantitative findings <u>and</u> textual examples from the content (e.g. quotations from news articles, screenshots from ads, descriptions of interactions in fictional programming) to show what this coverage looks like,
- Cite at least one in-class and outside-of-class academic source to support your description of the theory. Make sure to paraphrase (rather than directly quote) the findings of the sources you use as much as possible to ensure that the information flows well in your report.

[Heading identifying the second theory your team is applying]

In this subsection, your team should identify a second theory of media effects covered in this class that you think can shed light on possible effects of the patterns of coverage you found in your content analysis. The section should be about 2-3 paragraphs long, so address each point in a concise manner. Specifically:

- Clearly and accurately describe the general prediction(s) of the selected theory, as well as the components
 of the theory that are important for your project specifically,
- Given the predictions of the theory, speculate about what effects the content patterns your team found may have on people exposed to that content,
- Refer to your team's quantitative findings <u>and</u> textual examples from the content (e.g. quotations from news articles, screenshots from ads, descriptions of interactions in fictional programming) to show what this coverage looks like,
- Cite at least one in-class and outside-of-class academic source to support your description of the theory. Make sure to paraphrase (rather than directly quote) the findings of the sources you use as much as possible to ensure that the information flows well in your report.

SUGGESTIONS FOR MEDIA CONTENT

In this concluding paragraph, your team will make suggestions for improving media content, drawing from your results and the discussion of the implications. Based on your results and your discussion of the implications in the section above, provide content creators with some suggestions about how to improve political media content so that it has more democratically beneficial outcomes for audiences.

A few things to consider when writing this paragraph:

- Provide <u>specific</u> suggestions that relate to your findings and to the theories overviewed in the implications section,
- Think of questions like: how can journalists provide voters with information that will better help them with their voting decision? How can political ads better inform voters and/or be more effective in getting out the vote? How can show runners for fictional political content continue to be entertaining while also keeping people engaged in real world politics?
- Be sure to end on a powerful, memorable statement that will keep your readers thinking about your findings

In this section, your team will detail the methodological choices you made throughout the project. Your method section should address each of the following in as much detail as possible. IMPORTANT: Be sure to address all comments made on your proposal document.

Begin with a sentence or two introducing this section.

Sample

Describe the sample of media content that you've chosen. What source is the sample from? How many news articles, ads, or television episodes are in your sample?

Also describe the units of analysis. The units of analysis will differ based on the kind of texts you selected, though all groups will have approximately 400 – 500 units of analysis to code. Be sure to: (a) describe the units of analysis you will use for the study, (b) mention the number of units of analysis you will code, and (c) explain why the specific unit of analysis works well to analyze the texts you will study. The units of analysis will differ based on your source:

- News Articles: If you select the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal, your unit of analysis will be the full news article.
- Campaign Ads: If you select the campaign advertisements, your unit of analysis will be the advertisement.

• Fictional Program: If you select a fictional television program, your unit of analysis will be 60-seconds of episode time. To determine how many units of analysis you will code for your program, figure out how many minutes are in each episode and add the total number of episode minutes together.

Content Analysis Codes

Under this subheading, you will include the <u>final</u> codes your team used to answer your research questions. Your team has develop <u>four</u> codes, two to help you answer each of your research questions. Be sure, for each code, to (a) include a sentence or two justifying why you chose the code and how it helped you answer the research question and (b) list the exact codes you used to analyze your content.

Coding Plan

Your team completed coding in two rounds: a first round where all team members coded the <u>same</u> 10% of the units of analysis (to make sure the coding is consistent) and, after making any necessary changes to the codes, a second round in which you split the remaining 90% of the units of analysis among the members of the team and coded them separately.

In this section of the proposal, describe:

- how your team selected the 10% of units of analysis that everyone will code in round one (hint: don't just
 pick the first 10% of the units! They may not contain enough of the content you plan to study)
- how your team compared the first round of coding to make sure that the codes were strong and that the coding was consistent as possible
- how your team split up the remaining units of analysis for the final round of coding so that all units of analysis were coded
- IMPORTANT: briefly mention some of the changes that your team made to the codes after your first round of coding and explain why you made those changes.

REFERENCE LIST

In this section, include, in alphabetical order, all of the report's references. Make sure to cite all sources referenced in the main text and to avoid citing any sources that are not referenced in the main text. Also, be sure to follow APA style. Here are a few websites that can help you correctly follow APA: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research and citation/apa style/apa formatting and style guide/general form at.html and https://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2017/09/best-of-the-apa-style-blog-2017-edition.html

Also, you can try the resource ReCite, which should be able to find deviations from APA (or Harvard) reference styles and compare your reference list to your main text to make sure they match. (You can access the website here: https://reciteworks.com). That said, this website is in Beta and I am not sure that it will work well with a paper formatted in this way, so do not blindly follow its suggestions.