

## Suggestions for Writing Proposals

Do not approach writing your proposal like you would a research publication. There is a significant difference between a proposal and other academic publications. Proposals must be forward looking and persuasive.

### **Your Proposal Is a Sales Document, Not a Scientific or Scholarly Paper**

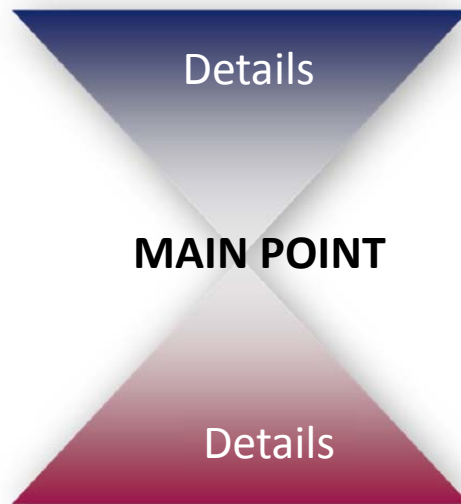
Good proposal writing turns the scientific or scholarly model many authors know from their professional experience upside down. Rather than drawing conclusions from an array of details, proposal writing begins with a conclusion and provides substantiating facts to support it.

#### **Scientific/Scholarly Writing**

Scientific or scholarly writing starts with the details and subordinates main points.

#### **Proposal Writing**

Proposal writing starts with the main point and subordinates details.



Below are differences between your academic writing and grant writing.

<b>Academic Writing versus Grant Writing</b>	
<b>Academic Writing</b>	<b>Grant Writing</b>
Scholarly pursuit - Individual passion	Sponsor goals - Service attitude
Past Oriented - What has been done	Future Oriented - What should be done
Theme-centered - Theory and thesis	Project-centered – Activities
Expository rhetoric – Explaining	Persuasive rhetoric - “Selling”
Impersonal tone: Objective	Personal tone: Excitement
Individualistic	Team-focused: Feedback needed
Few length constraints	Strict length constraints
Specialized terminology	Accessible language

FROM: Porter, Journal of Research Administration, 2007

## Create Reviewer-Friendly Text

- Ensure that main section headings mirror RFP requirements
- Use titles, section headings, and sub-headings that are descriptive and reflect the benefit for the proposed work. For example, “*Water Systems*” vs. “*Innovative Systems to Promote Efficient Water Usage*”
- Discuss main points first and then provide details
- Use the same terminology as that in the RFP and ensure it is consistent
- Use consistent writing style – one “voice” (especially important for proposals with multiple writers)
- Define potentially unfamiliar terms
- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations
- Make it easy for reviewers to find the key concepts, benefits, and features of your proposal by using graphics and bulleted lists
- Examples of graphics:

Table X	
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Xxxxxx	xxxxxxx



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- ✓ XXXXXXXXX
- ✓ XXXXXXXXXXX

