

## Tip from the Trenches

# One Key to Grant-Writing Success

Many scientists approach all writing tasks the same way. But as Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon note in *On the Art of Writing Proposals*, writing for research funding “is an art quite different from research work itself.”

Each type of scientific writing — journal articles, literature reviews, grant proposals — has a different goal and a different audience. Understanding how to clearly communicate the necessary information to a specific audience is the key to successful writing.



### Who is the audience?

Your goal is to convince the audience that your research project is well planned and feasible and that you are qualified to conduct it. Przeworski and Salomon state that grant reviewers have three questions in mind:

- What are we going to learn as a result of the proposed project that we do not know now?
- Why is it worth knowing?
- How will we know that the conclusions are valid?

Your goal is to answer these questions in a way that will be clear to your audience. But who *is* the audience?

You can expect most grant audiences to share a few general attributes:

- The audience probably has at least some general knowledge of the discipline to which the grant relates.
- The reviewers do not want to work to understand your proposal. They will have many other proposals to get through, and if yours is poorly organized or written, they will simply move on to the next one.

Beyond that, the specific requirements for the proposal package are your best clues as to what the audience wants and expects. Study these requirements and do your best to meet them.

### What is audience analysis?

As we explain in our blog post, *Tips to Make your Technical and Scientific Writing More Effective*, you should always schedule time to create a solid analysis of the audience. An audience rubric, or checklist, can be a helpful tool. Items to put on the list include

- What knowledge do audience members already have?
- What will need to be explained to them?
- What information do they want, and why?
- What form of content do they expect?
- How will the information be used?
- What are their biases or beliefs?

The more you know about audience analysis, the more precisely you can communicate your re-search plans — and the more likely you will secure funding.

Yes, you can learn to do this! Contact Hurley Write toll-free at 877-24-WRITE (877-249-7483) or by email for more information about our training courses.