VI4 presents...

GRANT WRITING

DOs   DON'Ts

✓   ✗

FORMATTING

T

Pick a font that is easy to read and within the rules.

Make it visually appealing.

Organize the text in a clear way. Use **bold**, *italics*, and underlining sparingly and in a consistent way. Use contrasting, color-blind friendly colors in figures.

Write clear figure legends.

Legends should concisely state what was done and what was concluded.

Print out your proposal.

Make sure you can read all text and discern all colors from a single printed page.

Aa
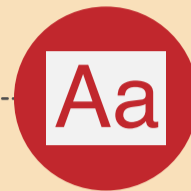
Use fonts that are difficult to read.

Jam-pack your grant with confusing content.

White space can be helpful for the reviewer! Don't highlight everything in the grant, or use confusing numbering systems.

Leave out figure legends.

Unclear or non-existent figure legends make it harder to read and follow.

Make your reviewers zoom in to read figures.

Modify figures if necessary to pull out critical data.

WRITING

Write "We will test whether..."

Make it as easy to read.

Spell out all acronyms once. Make sure all antecedents are clear.

Use first person in fellowships when appropriate.

Make it clear what you did/are doing vs. mentors/others in the lab.

Use proper nomenclature for your field.

Reviewers may not be in your specific niche, so it's important to not use too much jargon, but be accurate.

Read your application out loud.

If it reads well, it will be easier for the reviewer to read. You can also have Microsoft read aloud to you or have someone else read it to catch more typos.

Write "To prove our hypothesis..."

Overusing acronyms.

Only use acronyms if they are referred to 3+ times. *We know it's hard, immunologists.*

Use "we" in a fellowship application.

The purpose is to fund the trainee, not the lab.

"Don't use a $5 word when a 50¢ word will do."

And don't overuse words like innovative, novel, etc.

Make numerous typos or use improper grammar.

This should not impact score, especially for non-native speakers, but can be distracting for a reviewer.

CONTENT

Utilize your biosketch and key personnel.

Have collaborators that are experts in areas you are lacking in, and make sure their biosketches are included.

Use alternatives to describe what you'll do if hypothesis is wrong.

Summarize your proposal with a figure.

This can be similar to a graphical abstract.

Clearly state why reviewer should care/what gap you will fill.

Highlight the significance of your work early in proposal.

Make your aims interconnected.

Each aim should play a small part in the larger story.

Explain prioritization strategies for any experiment that will yield a large number of "hits".

Read and evaluate literature that is critical to proposing novel and useful research.

Forget to include expert collaborators as key personnel.

Make sure to include all biosketches and tailor them for the proposal.

Use the alternative approaches to only address technical issues.

Force your reviewer to draw their own schematic to understand your proposal.

Simply argue that the disease affects a lot of people.

Or that is should be studied because it is unknown.

Make your aims interdependent.

If one aim fails, it shouldn't impact the success of the other aims.

Proposing screens without describing how you will analyze/prioritize the data and prioritize follow ups.

Ignore papers that don't support your hypothesis.

Or not reading all papers cited in the proposal.