RTFM

Dos and Don’ts of Grant Writing
(and working with your editor)

Topics for today: Funnel

- Before you even start writing
- Take your funders seriously
- Content of your proposal
- Formatting
- Writing style
- Working with your editor

Happy to share this powerpoint

RTFM before you start (ISF is only 13 pages in Hebrew)

- Is this the right funder/grant for my research?
- Preliminary results: is my request ripe (particularly for large grants)?
- Know your deadlines particularly for budget approval
- Send out requests for cooperation letters
- C.V. keep it updated
- Line up your editor in advance
- Even the best writers need proofreading. Tip: read text aloud

Take your funders seriously

- A late submission is a nonsubmission
- You can’t fool the funder: No funding for airfare/equipment? Don’t ask for it!
- Partnership grants: explain why execution is only possible/exponentially better due to the partnership (e.g., GIF)
- Funding new institutions/labs/centers: focus on infrastructure and administrative support
- No double-dipping – e.g., National Geographic



Content

- Explain why the grant is necessary: good editing can’t save bad research
- Scientific review: include only the latest controversial stuff and the unavoidable
- Research questions/objectives: clear and precise
- Method: clear and detailed where required
- Project doable and in time allotted
- Design will achieve stated objectives
- Cite potential reviewers
- When possible be bold

Questions?

Formatting issues

- Use the order and format given (even when frustrating) it enables comparison – e.g., Wenner-Gren Foundation (1. purpose / 5. contribution)
- Page and word limits
- Page size: A4 (not letter)
- Margins (Office 2003 default v. 2.54 cm)
- Font/size (preference Times New Roman)
- The rest of the world reads from left to right: set default to English
- Watch out for automated section numbering
- Paragraphing: Don’t be Israeli – don’t left-justify new paragraphs! Indent without an extra line to save space

Writing style

- American v. British English
- Open with a dramatic sentence (this is not an academic article)
- Active voice
- Short sentences, o.k. philosophy is an exception
- No need to say “Researchers found…”
- No rhetorical questions
- Don’t insult other researchers (they could be the readers of your proposal)
- Avoid negativity: State need for research in the positive

Writing style

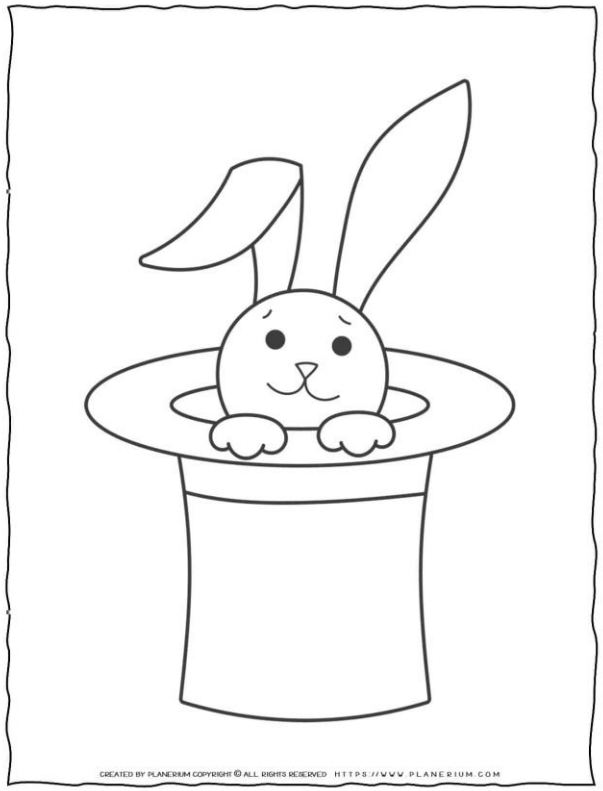
- No quotes/long quotes unless integral to style
- Don’t put common terms in “quotes”
- No footnotes: if it is important put it in the text
- (Avoid overuse of parentheses)
- Important and necessary and exciting and will open windows into the future: say no to multiple words
- Avoid overuse of the dash – reserve for drama/major impact
- Retranslating terms back into English: a big no-no
- Beware of the cut-and-paste shortcut from a prior grant request

הדרך הקצרה עלולה להיות הדרך הארוכה



Working with your editor

- Get a commitment in advance
- Be clear about what is expected: Text, C.V., Bibliography, abstract, budget, budget explanation…
- Editors are magicians – but cutting 2,000 words from a 10,000 word text is not possible
- Use track changes ALWAYS for ALL new additions and corrections
- Delete all resolved comments/questions
- What I did over summer vacation: put my references in EndNote, Mendeley…



Practice makes perfect

