

ARCH 631. Creating Reviewer-Friendly Text and Graphics

adapted from “The Craft of Grant Writing”, presented by
Phyllis McBride, PhD., Office of Proposal Development, Texas A&M University (2006)

For any written document, the content, organization, style, and grammar are equally important. Shortcomings within any area may cause a reviewer to be annoyed, or even worse, believe that the document they are reading is just a waste of their time and stop reviewing. If the document is being assessed for a grade, it is extremely important that the document be “reviewer-friendly”.

The following is a list of suggestions to keep a reviewer “happy”:

- Divide the document into the required sections
- Place the sections in the required order
- Use parallel structure (also called *structural unity*) from one section to the next; i.e., if there is a bulleted list, the construction (order of noun, verb, etc.) should be consistent from bullet to bullet so that the expectation of pattern by the reader is not interrupted
- Incorporate logical paragraph breaks
- Open paragraphs with clear topic sentences
- Discuss important items first
- Avoid the use of inflated language
- Use declarative sentences; i.e., one that states a fact or argument, without requiring either an answer or action from the reader
- Define potentially unfamiliar terms
- Spell out acronyms and abbreviations
- Employ appropriate style and usage
- Use correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- Run a spell check and proofread the application. *Remember that spell checkers will not find mistypes that are correct words, but proofreading can!*
- Place graphics as close to the text they are meant to illustrate as possible
- Refer to graphics in the text
- Title all graphics, and number graphics if necessary for clarity
- Prepare a caption for all graphics
- Make graphics large enough to be useful
- Provide color copies if color and/or color gradient is important