Life after EVAN: Proposal writing

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MAX-PLANCK-GESELLSCHAFT

EVAN
setting landmarks in science
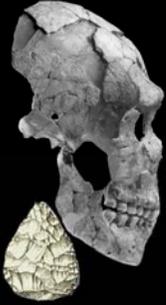
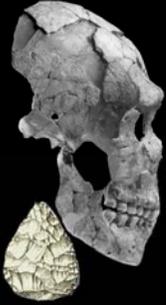# How to write successful proposals?

Rules of any scientific writing apply:

Subject matter: i.e. how good is your project?

Structure: i.e. how clearly have you articulated the project, its goals and timetable

Writing skills: how well written is your text? Grammatical, spelling errors? how good is your language?

Much like scientific papers, proposals will be judged by a set of outside anonymous reviewers. These are usually experts in your field.

How to write successful proposals?

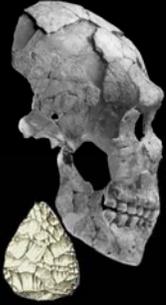## Subject matter: How good is your project?

Even if you have a great project, you must be able to convey that to the people who will decide about funding, i.e. the expert referees.

Straight from the beginning of the proposal you must answer the following questions for the referees and the funding inst.:

-WHY SHOULD I BOTHER READING THIS CAREFULLY?

-WHY SHOULD THIS PROJECT BE RECOMMENDED AND NOT THE OTHER 100 THAT ARE ALSO BEING REVIEWED?

In other words, why should anyone care about your project?
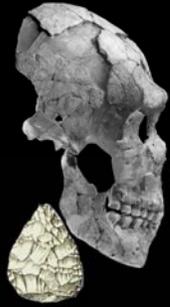
How to write successful proposals?

Subject matter: How good is your project?

State your **QUESTION**. Why is it interesting?

State your **OBJECTIVES** in the abstract, introduction and in the concluding section.

In other words:

- **TELL THEM WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TELL THEM**
- **TELL THEM**
- **TELL THEM WHAT YOU TOLD THEM**

How to write successful proposals?

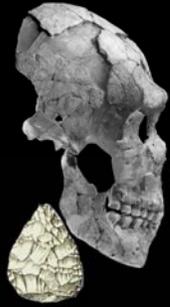**Subject matter: How good is your project?**

Important points to make:

THIS PROJECT TESTS XYZ IMPORTANT HYPOTHESIS

THIS PROJECT IS NOVEL

THIS PROJECT FILLS A GAP IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH

THIS PROJECT TESTS WILL HAVE IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUR FIELD
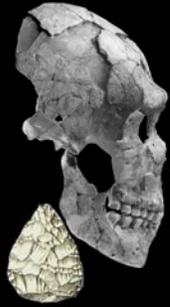
How to write successful proposals?

Structure

Again like a scientific paper, proposals have a standard structure and format.

CHECK INSTITUTION GUIDELINES BEFORE WRITING!!!

Aside from this given format, your proposal should have its own internal logical structure.

I.e., there should be an logical argument for conducting the project you propose, for how it should be conducted, how long it should take and how much money it would cost.
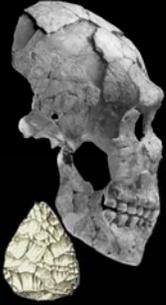
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Writing skills

A sloppy text is likely not to be given due consideration.

The reviewers are likely to be annoyed and / or angered by a sloppy text, because:

YOU ARE WASTING THEIR TIME!

EDIT YOUR WORK REPEATEDLY BEFORE SUBMITTING!
CHECK FOR SPELLING, TYPOES AND OTHER MISTAKES.
HAVE A NATIVE SPEAKER CHECK FOR LANGUAGE.

A well-written, clean text shows you put a lot of thought and work into this proposal. It also shows your respect toward the reviewers and their valuable time.

How to write successful proposals?

Final advice:

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE!