



Transforming a Descriptive Narrative *of* Research into an Effective Appeal *for* Research

This advanced guideline supplements the “Funding Justification Narrative” and “Project Narrative” Guidelines for Fordham-funded Faculty Research Grant and Faculty Fellowship applications respectively.

The structure of those two narrative guidelines is designed to enable you to construct a concise concept paper that will not only facilitate the review of applications for Fordham’s support of your research, but that will also act as the seed from which any external grant or fellowship applications for your project will germinate.

Therefore, while those narrative guidelines provide structure for thinking and writing about your research, this advanced guideline addresses its style and substance. Together, the narrative guidelines make certain you have drafted a good descriptive narrative *of* your research – the roots and trunk of your writing – while the second provides the foliage and flowers necessary to bear fruit: an effective appeal *for* your research.

“Transforming a Descriptive Narrative *of* Research into an Effective Appeal *for* Research” is structured as a tabled outline in three sections:

1. Compelling Writing pp. 2 – 12
2. Clear Writing pp. 13 – 19
3. The Complete Package pp. 19 – 26

Each section of the table lists its sequential transforming concept or technique in the left hand column with explanations and examples at right.

Information on how to gain further assistance appears at the end of the guide.

We hope you find the following guide helpful and we look forward to working with you!

<p>In order to make certain every part of your appeal gets your ABCs across, review your writing as if it were a package you were delivering unsolicited.</p> <p>In order for that package to be received, opened, examined, kept and ultimately paid for, your “packaged appeal” must possess 5 CRITICAL QUALITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately labeled • Easily opened • Quick to unpack • Distinguishable • Compelling enough to keep 	<p>Your appeal must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately labeled • Easily opened • Quick to unpack • Distinguishable • Compelling enough to keep <p>Each of these 5 critical qualities will be discussed in turn below.</p> <p>Please note: there is one further quality – “incredibly detailed” – that is not listed above.</p> <p>That’s because to provide “incredible detail” is a researcher’s natural inclination – it’s what makes them good researchers!</p> <p><i>However</i>, this inclination is at odds with creating a package that is easy to open and quick to unpack.</p> <p>Furthermore, it often causes attempts to distinguish a package’s content to become “lost in the details”, undermining its quality to compel.</p> <p>Don’t worry, we’ll include details, but only the minimum necessary to serve your ABCs and make it easier for reviewers to quickly conclude: <i>I see, I understand, and I agree!</i></p>
<p>Quality #1:</p> <p>Appropriately Labeled</p> <p>Result: “5 second pitch” for your project</p>	<p><u>Your title should be catchy & informative.</u></p> <p>Catchy = the use of contrast, controversy, quote, cliché, command, or, in case you couldn’t tell, alliteration</p> <p>Informative = if someone were to ask the reviewer what your narrative was about, all the reviewer would have to do is quote your title (i.e., title + subtitle)</p> <p>Catchy + Informative = your “5 second pitch”</p> <p>Ask yourself, if you had only 5 seconds to (a) catch the attention of, and (b) describe your project to a stranger with no prior awareness of you or your work, but who has the money to fund it, would your title do the trick?</p> <p>Only once you can answer 100% yes is your package appropriately labeled. Get other people’s opinions on your potential “labels”. Ask people both inside and outside of your discipline.</p>

<p>Quality #2:</p> <p>Easily Opened</p>	<p><u>Your opening paragraphs should be:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy on the eyes Not too long! Break up a long paragraph. This will also force you to think about the flow of logic in your writing and prevent you from presenting “incredible detail” at a point that doesn’t serve your ABCs. • Confidently worded Don’t use weak or vague words and phrases like “help”, “finish researching”, “I would like to”, “in my opinion”, “tentatively”, etc. Be confident, be specific, and assure the reviewer that there will be a tangible result if you are funded. Furthermore, unless it is your specific intent upon the considered counsel of your peers and Grant Officer, your language should not give any inkling that this funding is “do-or-die” for your project. The reviewer should come away from your opening paragraphs convinced that this project is already underway, even if only in planning; that it is viable; and that it is going to proceed. Period. Funders want to hitch their wagons to winners – not rescue troubled projects. • Sensibly Structured The beginning of each paragraph should clearly declare what that paragraph is about. The end of each paragraph should either be a logical conclusion drawn from the content of the paragraph and connected to its opening, or segue to the paragraph that follows. This should be true for your entire narrative, but is imperative at its opening. As an exercise, scan the first and last 1-2 lines of every paragraph in your narrative. That alone should give the reviewer a good sense of what you want, why you want it, and how your request can be quickly distinguished from the myriad others she will receive. If it doesn’t, or if at some point during your scan your appeal seems to have lost that thread, that’s where you abandoned your ABCs and must either cut or revise. <p><u>If you followed the structure</u> of the Fordham Faculty Research Grant “Funding Justification Narrative” or Faculty Fellowship “Project Narrative” guidelines, once you have reviewed your opening paragraphs to make certain they are easy on the eyes, confidently worded and sensibly structured, you should have an opening that within a maximum of 60 seconds informs the reviewer:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) about a specific, tangible product to finance (whether that be a book or a biosphere, an epic poem or experiments in a lab); (ii) how such support will make a difference (produce it faster, better, with greater access, dissemination, collaboration, etc.) (iii) the time frame for that product’s completion and availability in consideration of its current status; (iv) the author’s authority and competence to make those assertions.
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<p><i>Quality #2: Easily Opened (cont'd)</i></p> <p>Result: “60 second pitch” for your project</p>	<p>A confidently worded, sensibly structured, easy on the eyes (i)-(iv) = your “60 second pitch”.</p> <p>Imagine a stranger with no prior awareness of you or your work, but who has the money to fund it, asked “What are you working on?”</p> <p>Without blinking an eye you gave her your 5 second pitch – your title.</p> <p>Intrigued, she says, “I’m stepping out of the building for a moment, you can tell me more while I walk to the door.”</p> <p>Now you pull out your “60 second pitch” – it’s exactly the same as your “5 second pitch” (after all, that worked!), but with just the type and amount of detail added that (a) can fit into 55 seconds; and (b) will <i>best</i> serve your ABCs.</p> <p>Does your “60 second pitch” satisfy both (a) & (b)? Only once you can answer 100% yes are you certain your package can be easily opened. Get other people’s opinions on your potential “opening”. Ask people both inside and outside of your discipline.</p>
<p>Quality #3: Quick to Unpack</p>	<p>Returning to our original analogy, assume the package you sent unsolicited was appropriately labeled and easily opened. The paragraphs that follow must now be quick to “unpack” what you promised, providing further details about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the structure, attributes and beneficiaries of the specific, tangible product for which you’re requesting financing; (ii) the materials and methods that will enable its production and upon which the requested financing will be spent; (iii) your research and findings to date that will justify your promise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of a specific, tangible product - from the materials and methods for which you are requesting financing - within your previously stated time frame for its completion and availability; (iv) your authority and competence to make those assertions – but unlike in the opening, when “unpacking” you don’t need to do this through explicit statements, as your authority and competence will (or will not) be implied by how you handle (i) – (iii). <p>Please note, you’ve already done the difficult work: making certain your packaged appeal was appropriately labeled and easily opened.</p> <p>The difficulty in making your package quick to unpack is not what you fail to do, but what you fail not to do:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DON’T OVERSTUFF!</p>

Quality #3:
Quick to Unpack
(cont'd)

This is your first opportunity to discuss the details of your work, and the researcher's natural inclination – which is what makes them good researchers – is to be incredibly detailed.

AVOID THE TEMPTATION!

Why?

Because your package still hasn't performed the next critical task on the list: distinguishing your project from the myriad others this reviewer is going to have to consider.

In other words, you want to provide only enough detail to:

- a) show that there is substance behind your appropriate label and easy opening; and
- b) enable you to quickly and credibly distinguish your project.

Anything that delays distinguishing your project puts its getting funded at risk – including too much detail!

Details are good, details are necessary, but NOT at the sacrifice of your ABCs or the risk of failing to be easy on the eyes, word confidently and structure your paragraphs sensibly.

Don't believe me?

Imagine you're still speaking with this stranger who had no prior awareness of you or your work, but who has the money to fund it.

So far you have succeeded in:

- Capturing her attention with your "5 second pitch" (the appropriate label of a catchy and informative title)
- Keeping her attention with your "60 second pitch" (the easily opened amount of detail that both fits into 55 seconds and best serves your ABCs)

Now you're at the door of her office building, and she says, "You know, I'm meeting someone for coffee just around the corner – if you have a couple minutes, why don't you walk with me and give me a few of the details."

Result:

Careful and considered packing enables your reviewer to quickly **unpack** your appeal and get to its most important quality: How it can be distinguished

You want to come off as the professional you are – translate: fundable – but at no point wear out your welcome by going on too long or in a manner that is inaccessible or alienating to your listener. Most of all, you don't want to find yourself at the coffee shop door still in the middle of your unpacking – the most important things you have to say to distinguish your project from all the others she'll have to consider still left unsaid – only to hear her apologize: "I've got to go."

How well did you write your "unpacking" of the details?

<p>Quality #4: Distinguishable</p> <p>Using the Fordham Faculty Fellowship & Research Grant Guidelines:</p> <p>Easy Opening = your “abstract” and that part of your “background” section that discusses how your project is related to past and current scholarship in the field</p>	<p>This quality is so critical that we give it its own treatment, although it is technically part of your unpacking.</p> <p>In other words, returning to our “unsolicited package” analogy, if you received a piece of junk mail trying to get you to switch from one car insurance company to another, in order to succeed it would have to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriately labeled to make certain you not only received it, but also didn’t discard it without opening; • Easily opened, meaning that the envelope and its contents opened, unfolded and revealed themselves not only without impediment, but in a way that prevents pre-judgment that may result in your prematurely discarding its contents; • Quick to unpack so that, having forestalled superficial pre-judgment, the package enables you to assess in a short amount of time whether what this car insurance company offers is of potential value – <i>which by necessity means it must distinguish its offer from whatever car insurance you currently have!</i> <p>This common experience makes it clear why:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) distinguishing is part of unpacking; (ii) unpacking cannot under any circumstances get bogged down in extra details that delay distinguishing; and (iii) <u>distinguishing is critical to your proposal getting funded.</u> <p>The following is the ideal way to set up distinguishing your appeal using the “qualities” we’ve already discussed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) begin your “easy opening” strong, with a re-statement of your “appropriate label” that links in the mind of the reviewer the title of your project to your main assertion or hypothesis. <p>Example: “A National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship would be of tremendous benefit to my research regarding <i>The Playthings of Empire</i>, an examination of...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>The Playthings of Empire</i> builds upon my...”</p> b) end your “easy opening” with a clear statement of what your project (again, use its “label”) will produce with this funding. <p>Example: “If awarded, I would use my National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend to undertake...</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship would therefore enable me to expedite my research and complete my manuscript in time to submit <i>The Playthings of Empire</i> for publication by the end of August 2017.”</p>
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<p><i>Quality #4: Distinguishable (cont'd)</i></p> <p>Using the Fordham Faculty Fellowship & Research Grant Guidelines:</p> <p>Unpacking = that part of your “background” section that discusses your own relevant scholarship ((c) at right) + the beginning of your “contribution” section, which should be similar to (d) and (e) at right</p> <p>Therefore, distinguishing (f) comes quickly in your contribution section, before it moves on to more detailed discussion of research methods and materials, etc.</p>	<p>c) start your “unpacking” with a clear paragraph organized under the theme “my research to date has...”</p> <p>d) further your “unpacking” through a second paragraph organized under the theme of what the product of your labeled project will achieve.</p> <p>Example: “My book, <i>The Playthings of Empire</i>, will analyze travelogues, memoirs, correspondences... My research revolves around...”</p> <p>e) having captured your reviewer’s attention and convinced her of both your credibility and that this project is a going concern, end your second paragraph of unpacking with a strong assertion of your main thesis/hypothesis.</p> <p>Example: “Therefore, <i>The Playthings of Empire</i> argues that...”</p> <p>f) <u>now distinguish your project</u>: start a new paragraph that first explicitly states <i>how</i>, then offers evidence <i>why</i>, and finally therefore concludes <i>that</i>: the thesis/hypothesis you just strongly asserted is both novel and relevant.</p> <p>Example: “<i>The Playthings of Empire</i> <u>fills an important gap</u> in the critical literature on gender and colonialism <u>by</u> providing the first full-length study of ...</p> <p>...my approach <u>is distinctive</u> among literary scholars of colonialism <u>because</u> I merge recent critical theory with more traditional methodologies...</p> <p>... this historical reconstruction <u>will be of interest</u> not only <u>to</u>...”</p> <p>To distinguish your appeal from others in your field, and even from other “packages” outside of your field that reviewers will have to consider, you must convince them of these two critical claims: that your project is both novel and relevant.</p> <p>The concept of novel is clear – funders cannot justify funding something that has already been done and satisfactorily settled.</p> <p>Relevancy is established on a continuum that begins with how important your project is to your narrow area of research, and grows stronger as it can expand to encompass related research, your entire discipline, other disciplines, and finally practical application (e.g., policy formation, technological innovation, direct service and education, etc.). The more widely relevant your project, the easier it is for a reviewer to recommend it, because it’s easier for a funder to justify paying for it.</p>
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Quality #4:
Distinguishable
(cont'd)

Therefore, make it easier for reviewers to recommend your project by explicitly providing them with these two justifications – that’s what it means to distinguish the contents of your package from all the others.

In other words, (a) – (f) above = your “3 minute pitch”

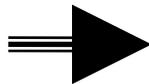
Which, to continue to mix my metaphors, is about 30 – 60 seconds longer than it took us to walk to our imaginary coffee shop.

Why?

Because if you’ve opened and unpacked well, after about two minutes the well-funded stranger we have been accompanying to her next appointment should either:

- (a) already be thinking on her own how novel and relevant your project is; or
- (b) suitably impressed and intrigued to ask you to tell her.

Either way, you have created a 30-60 second window of opportunity to distinguish your project before she walks through that coffee shop door.



This is your “distinguishing moment”: the point at which this reviewer will decide whether or not to recommend you for funding.

If she is not convinced here at the coffee shop door (i.e., if you fail to distinguish your project), there is little chance that anything else you may say later in your appeal will change her mind – if she even reads it.

However, if you do convince her, (i.e., you do successfully distinguish your project in these 30-60 seconds at the coffee shop door), then as long as nothing you say later in your appeal undermines the perception you have created that you and your project are competent, novel and relevant – her recommendation is yours.

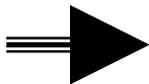
Result:
Unpacking
+ Distinguishing
= “3 minute pitch”
for your project

Is she going to regretfully pull herself away for her next appointment, but ask you to send her the full details, for which she’ll wait with great anticipation? Is she going to invite you into the coffee shop because she can’t wait to show off this great researcher and the exciting project she discovered?

Don’t leave it to chance – get other people’s opinions on your potential “3 minute pitch”. Ask people both inside and outside of your discipline.

“Incredible Detail”

Incredible means unbelievable or overwhelming – neither of which are how you want a reviewer to characterize your details, and neither of which are qualities of an effective appeal.



Please Remember:

Because providing incredible detail is your area of strength, you will be tempted to:

- go beyond page and word limits
- use without definition jargon that perhaps few outside your area of inquiry understand
- give priority to information that you think is important over what a funder has asked for
- not get input from peers – particularly those outside your discipline – regarding the clarity of your writing

DON'T DO IT!

Please remember, “incredible detail” was *not* one of the 5 qualities your package must possess. To the contrary, avoiding too much detail at the wrong time has been a central theme of this guide.

However, because now is the right time for your appeal to go into greater detail – to the extent that it has been requested – we must discuss how to provide that detail. Even so, that last caveat about the “extent requested” still serves to emphasize how subordinate this detail will be to the 5 critical qualities your packaged appeal must possess, particularly being “distinguished.”

In fact, the main difference between a descriptive narrative of research and an effective appeal for research is the relative importance each places on detail. In an effective appeal details are only provided to the extent that they enhance your appeal’s 5 critical qualities and act to remind the reviewer of your ABCs.

In other words, all of the following take precedence:

- Labeling (5 second pitch for your project)
- Opening (60 second pitch for your project)
- Unpacking (3 minute pitch for your project)
- Distinguishing (ends the unpacking of your 3 minute pitch by:
 - confirming* any reviewer’s conclusion that your project is novel and relevant;
 - explicitly informing* reviewers how your project is novel and relevant;
 - anticipating and dispelling* any concerns that your project is not novel and relevant.)
- Concluding (reiterating your pitch and its justifications)

These 5 activities take precedence over “incredible detail” because what get funded are overarching ideas and their impact; therefore, you never want to take reviewers too far away from those themes.

Funders will let you know how much detail they want by the length of the narrative they ask for – therefore, the “incredible detail” that comes between your critical distinguishing moment and your compelling conclusion is precisely that section of your appeal that you will expand, contract, or cut completely in order to fit into the “time” you have been allotted.

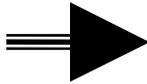
As an exercise, skip from the end of your “unpacking” (i.e., after you distinguished your project) straight to your conclusion. It should feel close to a natural transition – add a short segue sentence and your appeal should feel complete even without all of the details that come in between. If it doesn’t, then there are problems in how you unpacked, distinguished or concluded – something needs to be either revised or cut.

Quality #5:
Compelling enough to
Keep
(cont'd)

In fact, the former analogy is perfectly apropos, because your favorable reviewer is going to recommend you to a larger committee of reviewers and/or the funder itself – your conclusion provides her with what to say on your behalf.

Therefore, your conclusion should:

- stick to the ABCs;
- NOT introduce *anything* new (this is a conclusion!);
- NEVER discuss detractors or potential issues of concern – even to dismiss them (to the extent necessary, these should have been discussed earlier – probably in your distinguishing moment– thereby arming your reviewer with arguments to dispel reservations, but not clouding, confusing or otherwise undermining *her* opening pitch);
- BE confidently worded and sensibly structured (see Quality #2: Easily Opened)
- NOT BE too long.



Basically, a good conclusion =

one paragraph

that reiterates your pitch in 60 seconds

while concretely reminding the reviewer of what justifies its funding:

- your competence to complete the research;
- that the research you will complete is novel;
- and that what it will produce is relevant.

Only once you are 100% certain your conclusion succinctly summarizes your appeal and these three justifications for its funding will you have armed your won-over reviewer with an appropriate pitch for your project. Get other people's opinions on your potential conclusion. Ask people both inside and outside of your discipline.

In Conclusion:

***Did you
Notice...?***

Appropriate Label	=	5 seconds
Easy Opening	=	60 seconds
Quick Unpacking + Distinguishing Moment	=	180 seconds (3 minutes)
<u>Compelling Conclusion</u>	=	60 seconds
TOTAL TIME	=	5 minutes

As the funder's word limits permit, put the greater – but *not* incredible – detail of your project between distinguishing & compelling

You have just transformed a description *of* research into an effective, organized 5 minute appeal *for* your research, which you can deliver to and be understood by everyone from the educated layperson to the lauded expert in your field – the former of which will be impressed by your clarity and brevity, and the latter of which will press you for details as they hunger for more.

Congratulations – your research has appeal!

II. CLEAR WRITING

TRANSFORMING TECHNIQUE	EXPLANATION
<p>Review (i) – (iii) at right →</p> <p>Clear Writing IS the product of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using common methods of organization to think about and present your subject (i) • knowing your audience, what they desire, and making it easy for them to satisfy that desire (ii) • explicitly telling your audience what you are going to say and how you are going to say it, then consistently doing so by anticipating and removing obstacles caused by inconsistent or uncommon grammar, small-scale organization or vocabulary (iii) 	<p>Clear Writing DOES NOT mean writing that is capable of being understood.</p> <p>Clear Writing DOES mean writing that is <i>incapable</i> of being <i>misunderstood</i>.</p> <p><u>Now that we have:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a structured way of thinking and writing about research using Fordham’s Faculty Research Grant or Fellowship narrative guidelines; and (ii) transformed that descriptive narrative into an effective appeal using the “transforming concepts” above; <i>we will</i> (iii) review our document at one last level of increasing detail to assess and correct its clarity of writing. <p>To do this, the following pages will present 3 key techniques in the left hand column of this table, with explanations and examples for each at right.</p> <p><u>The techniques to be presented are:</u></p> <p>Technique #1: Signal the research question</p> <p>Technique #2: Use consistent terms in a consistent order & kill jargon</p> <p>Technique #3: Keep a consistent point of view</p> <p>Once these 3 techniques have been employed, your appeal will be ready to re-visit a tool from our first section, <i>Compelling Writing</i>, that could also be a technique for <i>Clear Writing</i>, but which we will reserve for our final section, where it will be the concluding exercise to assemble your <i>Complete Package</i>.</p>

<p>Technique #1:</p> <p>Signal the research question</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research questions are explicit hypotheses containing the specific objectives that guide your research; • By “signaling” to your reviewer early in the appeal what your guiding research question is, you establish the reviewer’s expectations as she reads and assesses the rest of your appeal; • To signal your research question, use clear phrases like “my research will examine”, “we asked”, or “the study purpose was”; • Use question words like “whether”, “which”, “how” and “why”; • In the humanities, state what you expect to find or the rationale and purpose of your line of inquiry; • In the sciences, state the direction of your hypothesized effect as well as identify the type of variables and study design. <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <p>Not signaled: We are interested in the relationship between physical activity and depression.</p> <p>Signaled: This study will examine whether men who are physically active experience fewer symptoms of depression than men who are sedentary.</p> <p>Not signaled: My book of narrative history, informed by theoretical considerations, has grown from original research into criminal cases and procedures in early modern Germany. It is a case study of a young woman unjustly prosecuted for infanticide in the years 1661-1662, and of the lawyer who defended her. The book is an original investigation not only of the crime of infanticide, but of the ways in which courts and prosecutors “constructed” the criminal, especially in the case of women. Additionally, and perhaps even more important from a scholarly standpoint, is the way in which the suspect’s <i>Advocate</i> undertook to defend her and 1) opposed the use of torture in criminal cases, and 2) expanded the role of the defense.</p> <p>Signaled: My book is the case study of a young woman unjustly prosecuted in Germany from 1661-62 for infanticide, the lawyer who defended her, and how they sought to overcome the way courts used torture and limitations on available defenses to “construct” the female criminal.</p>
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Technique #2:

Use consistent terms in a consistent order & kill jargon

Make it easy for reviewers to understand your language and follow your logic:

- When using tables, graphs and charts, make certain your titles, axes, categories and captions use consistent terms and keep them in a consistent order – choose those terms and their order carefully to ensure that they highlight and don't hide your findings;
- Similarly, across the sections of your appeal (e.g., abstract, background, contribution, etc.), don't change your terminology or its order of examination;

Example: if in your introduction or in the title of your chart you propose to address

- aerobic capacity first
- body dissatisfaction second, and
- weight loss among dieters third

don't in a later section of your appeal or in the caption to your chart address

- weight loss first
- aerobic capacity second and
- body dissatisfaction among dieters third

or, for that matter, in later sections refer to these same phenomena as

- capacity for strenuous activity
- poor physical self-image and
- weight retention among dieters

These slight changes in terminology and their order, although describing the same phenomena and relationships, will make it more difficult for reviewers to follow your logic.

Furthermore, when creating charts, tables and graphs, choose the order of your terms to highlight your findings in the data you're presenting:

<u>Findings Hidden</u>	<u>Findings Highlighted</u>
Title: Body image, weight changes and aerobic capacity among exercise group participants	Percentage weight loss and aerobic capacity increase among exercise group participants according to level of body dissatisfaction at baseline
type: bar graph	bar graph
X-axis: body image	body dissatisfaction level
Y-axis: gain or loss (%)	percentage
Legend: weight, aerobic capacity	weight loss, aerobic capacity increase

*Technique #2:
Consistent terms,
Consistent Order &
Killing Jargon (cont'd)*

- Finally, repeat key terms **exactly**, and if there is **any** risk that a term will not be understood by a reviewer, make certain you define that term the first time it is used.

Although it is permissible to use uncommon technical or esoteric terms *when necessary*, it is NOT permissible to use alienating jargon.

Don't alienate your reviewer – kill confusion through education: define your terms and stick to them!

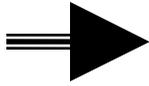
Example :

Original: Adhesion and detachment of tumor cells to one another and to heterologous cells may play a decisive role in cancer's metastases at several levels. Cell-cell and cell-substrate interactions are mediated through specific cell surface molecules. One of the best characterized types of cell adhesion receptors are integrins. These receptor complexes' 8 subfamilies, each defined by a common B unit non-covalently associated with an A subunit, span the plasma membrane and link the internal cytoskeletal network of a cell with the extracellular environment. The B1 subfamily has been considered to be the primary mediator of extracellular matrix adhesions. Recent observations suggest that the B1 integrins may have other functions, such as to mediate cell-cell adhesion directly. Testing the circumstances conducive for the B1 subfamily to conduct other than cell-substrate adhesion is the purpose of this proposal...(134 words)

Revised: The metastatic spread of cancer cells to surrounding tissues and vital organs is caused by cancer cells adhering to one another (cell-cell adhesion) or to other kinds of cells in the body (cell-substrate adhesion). Cancer cells mediate both of these forms of adhesion by means of cell adhesion receptors. One of the best characterized types of cell adhesion receptors are integrins, a family of integral membrane glycoproteins consisting of an A unit and non-covalently associated B unit. Eight subfamilies of integrins exist. These subfamilies are defined by their common B unit. The B1 subfamily is thought to have two functions. Originally, B1 integrins were thought to only mediate cell-substrate adhesion, but more recent research indicates that B1 integrins may also directly mediate cell-cell adhesion. The purpose of this study is to determine whether cell-cell adhesion is increased when...(139 words)

<p>Technique #3:</p> <p>Keep a consistent point of view</p>	<p>In order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid confusing the reviewer • Maintain continuity in your reasoning • Highlight contrasts or similarities in your findings <p>you must keep a consistent point of view by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting the subject of your sentence based on the emphasis you want to make; • Keeping the subject the same in all sentences where the topic is the same; • Structuring sentences so that parallel ideas appear in parallel form, which can also be aided by using consistent terms as explained in Technique #2; • Condensing your text as your new, consistent point of view permits. <p><u>Examples:</u></p> <p>Inconsistent: African American men lost weight. No weight was lost by Mexican American men.</p> <p><i>(subject was switched from men, and the emphasis was switched from ethnicity, to the subject and emphasis of “weight”)</i></p> <p>Consistent: African American men lost weight. Mexican American men did not lose weight.</p> <p>Inconsistent: The number of miles run was the same for men who exercised with a partner and without. Women exercising with a partner ran more miles than women who exercised without a partner.</p> <p><i>(subject was switched from “number of miles run” to the exerciser, and the relative emphasis on gender and exercising with a partner changed between the two sentences because their parallel ideas did not appear in parallel form; consequently the contrast between men and women was hidden, not highlighted)</i></p> <p>Consistent: Men exercising with a partner ran the same number of miles as those without a partner. Women exercising with a partner ran more miles than those without a partner.</p>
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<p><i>Technique #3: Keep a consistent point of view (cont'd)</i></p>	<p>Inconsistent: Quality of life was lower for homeless patients assigned to traditional linkage compared to case management. Case management resulted in less inpatient utilization at area hospitals. Percentages of those who moved out of homeless shelters showed similar differences between the two utilization systems. Patients in the typical primary care linkage system went to the emergency room for more visits compared to patients who were managed by social worker-based management. Patients in the case management system run by social service experts had higher levels of patient satisfaction with the medical system compared to levels of patients in usual care. Cost-effectiveness was lower for patients assigned to the traditional system than the social worker coordinated management of care. (115 words)</p> <p><i>(In this longer segment, sentence subjects are selected without regard for the emphases they make; subjects are not kept the same in sentences where the topic is the same; terms are not kept consistent; and parallel ideas do not appear in parallel form.</i></p> <p><i>Consequently this section is over long, inefficient at expressing its point, and could be considered the type of “incredible detail” that undermines the 5 qualities of an effective appeal, as well as distracts the reviewer from your ABCs – consider how your ABCs could be served by the “consistent” re-write below)</i></p> <p>Consistent: Homeless patients receiving case management had a higher quality of life and satisfaction with the medical system, fewer emergency room and inpatient visits, and were less likely to leave homeless shelters against professional advice than homeless patients receiving only traditional care. Consequently, homeless patients receiving case management also had fewer medical costs than those receiving only traditional care. (58 words)</p>
<p>In Conclusion:</p> <p><i>Did you Notice...?</i></p>	<p>In the last example for Technique #3 above, we</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transformed “incredible detail” into a statement serving our ABCs • cut the length of our text by 50% • but did NOT lose a single detail of what was in the original text! <p>That’s what clear writing does – it makes your appeal better by enabling you to say more with less.</p> <p>This is critical for anyone still struggling with our advice that to make your writing compelling, you need to avoid “incredible detail”.</p>



The clearer your writing becomes, the more details you can include.

Remember, incredible means unbelievable or overwhelming – neither of which are how you want a reviewer to characterize your details, and neither of which are qualities of an effective appeal.

Now that you have clear & compelling writing, let's move on to:

III. THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

1 QUESTION
1 CONCEPT
1 CONCLUSION

1 ANSWER, 1 EXPLANATION, 1 EXERCISE

Before We Begin:

Did you Notice...?

Part I – *Compelling Writing* – concluded that:

“An effective, organized 5 minute appeal *for* your research can be delivered to and understood by everyone from the educated layperson to the lauded expert in your field – the former of which will be impressed by your *clarity* and *brevity*, and the latter of which will press you for details as they *hunger for more*.”

Part II – *Clear Writing* – concluded that:

“Clear writing makes your appeal better by enabling you to say more with less... Incredible means unbelievable or overwhelming – neither of which are how you want a reviewer to characterize your details, and neither of which are qualities of an effective appeal.”

Therefore Part III – *The Complete Package* – will provide:

1. **an answer** to those who question whether this guide applies outside of Fordham because they still think what funders want is incredible detail *about* their research;
2. **an explanation** of the concept that your “effective appeal” can be used as an all-purpose tool *for* your research;
3. **a concluding exercise** to make sure the transformation of a descriptive narrative *about* your research into an effective appeal *for* your research is complete.

<p>1 Question:</p> <p>This guideline is fine when applying for a Fordham-funded Faculty Research Grant or Fellowship, but (DOD, DOE, NEA, NEH, NIH, NSF, etc.) applications are completely different.</p> <p>How does this “exercise” apply outside of Fordham?</p>	<p>First, a confession: You are correct, this is an “exercise”, and you will have to do substantial more work to turn it into an application to outside agencies</p> <p>Second, an assertion: That work will be a lot easier, it will be finished a lot quicker, and its results will be much better if you have successfully completed this “exercise”</p> <p>Why?</p> <p>Third, a correction: because although applications for Fordham-funded opportunities may differ from outside opportunities in <i>how</i> they ask for information – just as each of those outside opportunities differ from each other – <u>if you read their applications carefully you will see that we all want the same information:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your ABCs: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. what you want b. why you want it c. how your request can be distinguished from myriad others 2. Which, to understand and to facilitate comparison among applicants, must be organized so that we can quickly find the following “categories” of information: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a clear, brief description of your project <i>(the Fordham application’s “Abstract”)</i> b. evidence of your competence to undertake that project <i>(the Fordham application’s “Background”)</i> c. how our funding will be used and what will result from it <i>(the Fordham application’s “Contribution”)</i> d. unless a fellowship, what your project will cost and why <i>(the Fordham application’s “Cost”)</i> e. that this is sufficiently clear in your mind to make it sufficiently clear in ours so we can recommend it to others <i>(the Fordham application’s “Conclusion”)</i> 3. All presented in clear and compelling writing <p>Fourth, a caution: Therefore, although the nature of what’s provided in the individual categories may vary from project to project, opportunity to opportunity, application to application (e.g., is this an archival grant for your individual book project to be published next year, or an infrastructure support grant to equip a lab to be used by your entire department for generations?), the broad categories of abstract, background, contribution, cost and conclusion to clarify your ABCs</p>
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<p><i>How does this “exercise” apply outside of Fordham? (cont’d)</i></p>	<p>always apply (i.e., everything a funder asks for falls into one of these categories), as do the requirements of clear and compelling writing as defined by the 3 techniques and 5 critical qualities we presented.</p> <p><u>THEREFORE, researchers who fail to draft an effective appeal following these guidelines are:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ignoring their audience and its desires; and are consequently • at risk of not distinguishing their appeal; because they are • distracting the reviewer from their ABCs by • trying to compensate for a lack of organization through • including incredible – translate: unbelievable, overwhelming – detail <p>Certainly, such funding faux pas are from time to time overcome by personal connections, past reputation, being affiliated with research powerhouse people and institutions, or just pure luck – but the majority of researchers who rely on funding and reliably receive it don’t make these mistakes. Those researchers are who you should consider to be your colleagues – and your competitors for funding.</p>
<p>1 Concept:</p> <p>Your completed “effective appeal” as an all purpose tool for research:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agenda Setter 2. Internal Application 3. Guide to Funding Opportunities 4. Foundation for External Applications 5. Reporting, Promotional & Publicity Materials 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agenda Setter <p>Some researchers are blessed with an abundance of great research ideas, but cursed with figuring out where to begin: <i>Which ideas are related and which are tangential? Which are primary and which subsidiary? Which are part of the same project and which should stand on their own?</i> The act of writing an “effective appeal” – using the Fordham Faculty Research Grant Funding Justification Narrative guideline and this advanced guideline – will organize your thoughts, force you to think like a funder, and thereby help you answer these questions to determine your research agenda.</p> 2. Internal Application <p>Stay on top of when you’re eligible for a Fordham Faculty Fellowship, the eligibility requirements for Fordham Faculty Research Grants, and external agencies’ “limited submission opportunities”, which require Fordham to select from amongst faculty proposals a limited number of project(s) that may apply. All three of these opportunities use the standard of an “effective appeal” – the Fordham Faculty Research Grant Funding Justification Narrative guideline as it may be enhanced by this advanced guideline – as the standard for assessing proposals.</p> 3. Guide to Funding Opportunities <p>Sometimes researchers are uncertain where or how to look for funding opportunities, or when they meet with their Grant Officer they find it difficult to describe their research agenda or a distinct project in a way that suggests the parameters for a funding search. Fordham’s Director of Faculty Development can show you how</p>

Effective appeal as all purpose tool (cont'd)

to use your “effective appeal” to set the parameters for your own funding searches through such tools as grants.gov and the Foundation Directory Online. Drafting an effective appeal will also enable you to have a more productive conversation with your Grant Officer and/or provide her with a brief document that will facilitate your ongoing collaboration to obtain funding for your project.

4. **Foundation for External Applications**

Once you have:

- set your research agenda by drafting “effective appeal(s)” for your project(s);
- used an “effective appeal” to set the parameters for a particular project’s funding search; and
- identified an opportunity for which you’d like to apply;

use your “effective appeal” as the foundation for your application.

This is done by reviewing the funder’s application form or guidelines and identifying whether a particular section or request for information is asking for:

- a description of your project
(*supply and adapt* from your “Abstract” section*)
- evidence of your competence to undertake the project
(*supply and adapt* from your “Background” section*)
- how their funding will be used and what will result from it
(*supply and adapt* from your “Contribution” section*)
- what your project will cost and why
(*supply and adapt* from your “Cost” section*)
- a clear and concise synopsis of your project to facilitate reviewers’ summarizing it in a funding recommendation
(*supply and adapt* from your “Conclusion”*)

*The “adaptation” element in this process will:

- accommodate contributions that may be of unique concern to this funder but which are tangential to your research (e.g., how your project will enhance undergraduate education, increase the participation of minorities and women, etc.);
- enable you to supplement your response where they (not you!) have deemed it *necessary* to provide greater detail (i.e., as stated in *Compelling Writing*, you will expand, contract or cut the amount of detail you provide in accord with the funder’s page and word limits);
- *always* adhere to the techniques and qualities of clear and compelling writing.

Effective appeal as all purpose tool:

Foundation for External Applications

(cont'd)

The advantages of using your “effective appeal” as a foundation for your external applications are that it will ensure:

- Your project fits the opportunity

Don't waste time crafting and submitting a beautiful application that doesn't fit a funder's priorities.

Your effective appeal – drafted as a general appeal for your research, with no specific funder in mind – should be able to provide most or all the “contribution” category of information a particular funder requests. If it cannot, even with a reasonable expansion on the details of your project, then this is probably not the opportunity for you (e.g., the funder's emphasis is on how your project will contribute to an understanding of American foreign policy between World Wars, and your project is on American domestic policy during the westward expansion).

Don't waste opportunities by failing to see how your research could be crafted to fit a funder's priorities.

Your effective appeal – drafted as a general appeal for your research, with no specific funder in mind – helps prevent you from pigeonholing the “contribution” category of your research as only of interest to a specific funding opportunity. (e.g., if all you drafted was your last application to a specific opportunity exploring American domestic policy during the westward expansion, you may fail to see how your research could contribute to other funders' priorities regarding a specific state's history, Native American relations and issues, ethnic majority governments' treatment of ethnic minorities and indigenous populations, etc.). Preventing you from pigeonholing your contributions is also important because pigeonholing often results in researchers only applying for umbrella opportunities from large institutions (e.g., History, National Endowment for the Humanities) – along with everyone else and their uncle. Let your effective appeal expand your horizons.

Don't waste a reviewer by forcing her to read stale material written for somebody else.

Your effective appeal was drafted as a general appeal for your research, with no specific funder in mind – every time you supply and adapt information and language from your effective appeal to a new application, it's fresh, not forced. Imagine you bake wedding cakes. Every day you mix in a single bowl enough batter to bake all the cakes ordered with the same flavor. A bride and groom come to your shop – they're not insulted that you baked their cake from the same batter as four other weddings that day. But if someone got jilted at one of yesterday's weddings and you just scoop the names off the frosting to scribble down this happy couple, they're going to

Effective appeal as all purpose tool:

Foundation for External Applications

(cont'd)

be none too pleased. Same thing with reviewers and the funders they represent. We all know multiple applications to multiple funders for the same project are going to have similar qualities; but if we can see, smell or taste anything like recycled wedding cake, we're going to question your half-baked efforts – and whether we should pay for them.

- You don't have to reinvent the wheel with each application

Our discussion of wedding cakes aside, using your general "effective appeal" as a foundation means that you won't have to start from scratch with each application.

Thanks to your effective appeal, your core content for every application is:

- already written in clear and compelling language; and
- organized in a common, consistent format so you can easily find and extract what will respond to each element of a funder's application (as opposed to hunting for what you wrote for some section you can't remember in last year's NEH application, and something else in a differently named section of the Fulbright application you submitted two years ago, to cobble together a response for yet another slightly different question in the NEA application you're currently preparing!).

- You'll become an expert at understanding funding applications, gauging funder's priorities, and meeting funder's expectations

With practice, your review of funding applications to identify which "category" of material a section or request for information is actually seeking (e.g., abstract, background, contribution, cost or conclusion) will make you an expert at supplying the sought after material from your effective appeal. As you start to see the pattern to applications, it will take the guesswork out of filling them out (i.e., the question "what do they really want here?"); and with it the urge to overwhelm the reviewer with incredible detail. As you become even more familiar, you will start to see when a particular funder's application deviates from the standard pattern, indicating that funder's pet priorities. Instead of an obstacle to funding, you will find that the application becomes an opportunity: through the lens of your effective appeal, reading a funder's application will become like reading the funder's mind. This skill will transform your applications from an exercise in brute force into a strike with surgical precision.

<p><i>Effective appeal as all purpose tool (cont'd):</i></p> <p><i>Reporting, Promotional & Publicity Materials</i></p>	<p>5. Reporting, Promotional and Publicity Materials</p> <p>Once you are funded, your “effective appeal” serves to guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the format and style for future reporting on your grant or fellowship activity; - the talking points for “cocktail party” conversation about your research at networking opportunities (remember the “effective, organized 5 minute appeal” we had at the conclusion of our Compelling Writing section on page 12); - letters of inquiry and book proposals as you pursue publication; - the content for sound bites, interview quips, blogs, press releases, op-ed pieces and other forms of requested or offered “transient media” attention
<p>1 Conclusion:</p> <p>Your “effective appeal” will last you for life – or at least the life of its project, which, if you have truly crafted an <i>effective</i> appeal, should be a long and prosperous life indeed!</p>	<p>To ensure this healthy longevity, periodically run your effective appeals through the following exercise. As you gain more experience, your increasing prowess will enable you to further enhance your appeal’s clarity, completeness, and power to compel.</p> <p>Exercising your Effective Appeal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read through each paragraph of your effective appeal as if it was its own, independent mini-essay: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Does the first sentence declare the topic of this mini-essay? b. Does everything in the mini-essay support its first sentence? c. Does the last sentence of this mini-essay either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. slam home any assertion made in its first sentence by tying it to the evidence that came in the body; or ii. set up a question for or a segue to a second mini-essay in a way that will make the reader want to keep reading? d. “Train” your effective appeal until you can answer yes to each of (a), (b) and (c), then please escort your effective appeal to exercise machine number 2! 2. Go through your entire appeal from start to finish, but only reading the first and last 1-2 lines of text in each paragraph; from that limited reading, is it clear: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What you want? b. Why you want it? c. How your request can be quickly distinguished from the myriad others a reviewer will receive? d. “Train” your effective appeal until you can answer yes to each of (a), (b) and (c), then please escort your effective appeal to exercise machine number 3! 3. Read your appeal from its “appropriate label” up to and including your “distinguishing moment” <i>(i.e., your title, abstract, background, and as far into your</i>

	<p><i>contribution section as it took to “distinguish” your project)</i></p> <p>Now skip from the end of your “distinguishing moment” straight to your conclusion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Was your distinguishing moment as distinct as a slap in the face? b. Did your distinguishing moment arrive within the first three (ideally, the second) of the “not-overly-long” paragraphs of your contribution section? c. Did skipping from your distinguishing moment to your conclusion feel like a natural transition, so the reader wouldn’t feel like any material was missing and that the conclusion rendered a logical 60-second summation of everything that preceded, particularly that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. you’re competent to complete the research; ii. the research you will complete is novel; and iii. what it will produce is relevant? d. “Train” your effective appeal until you can answer yes to each of (a), (b) and (c) – then take a break, your exercise is complete! <p>Congratulations – you have completed the package.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">You now have a clear & compelling piece of writing that constitutes an effective appeal for your research!</p>
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GETTING ASSISTANCE

<p style="text-align: center;">How to Prepare, Perfect & Use Your Effective Appeal</p>	<p>Please contact: Tihana Sarlija Budget & Operations Manager tsarlija@fordham.edu or 718.817.0028</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Finding and/or Applying for External Support with Your Effective Appeal</p>	<p>Please contact the Grant Officer for your school or department in the Office of Sponsored Programs: www.fordham.edu/osp - click on “Contact Us”</p>