PIQUING THE INTEREST OF FUNDERS THROUGH PERSUASIVE PROPOSAL WRITING

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You Thrive
Training & Consulting LLC

ABOUT ME…

- Writing grants: 23 years

- Funder: 13 years

- Grant Professional Certified

- Immediate Past President of the Miami Valley, Ohio Chapter of the Grant Professionals Association

- Association of Fundraising Professionals member

- Raised over $31 million in last two years

4 TYPES OF WRITING

Expository writing
- Explain a concept
- Does not include the author's opinion
- Textbooks, how-to-articles, research papers, recipes

Descriptive writing
- Painting a picture
- Uses literary devices to describe the author's impressions
- Poetry, journal/diary writing, fictional novels

Narrative writing
- Not just impart information, but trying to communicate a story
- Oral histories, novels, anecdotes

Persuasive writing
- Tries to convince the audience of a position or belief
- Contains author's opinions and biases
- Cover letters, op-eds, GRANT PROPOSALS

PERSUASION = INFLUENCING BEHAVIOR

- To cause (someone) to believe something, especially after a sustained effort; to convince.

- To cause (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument.

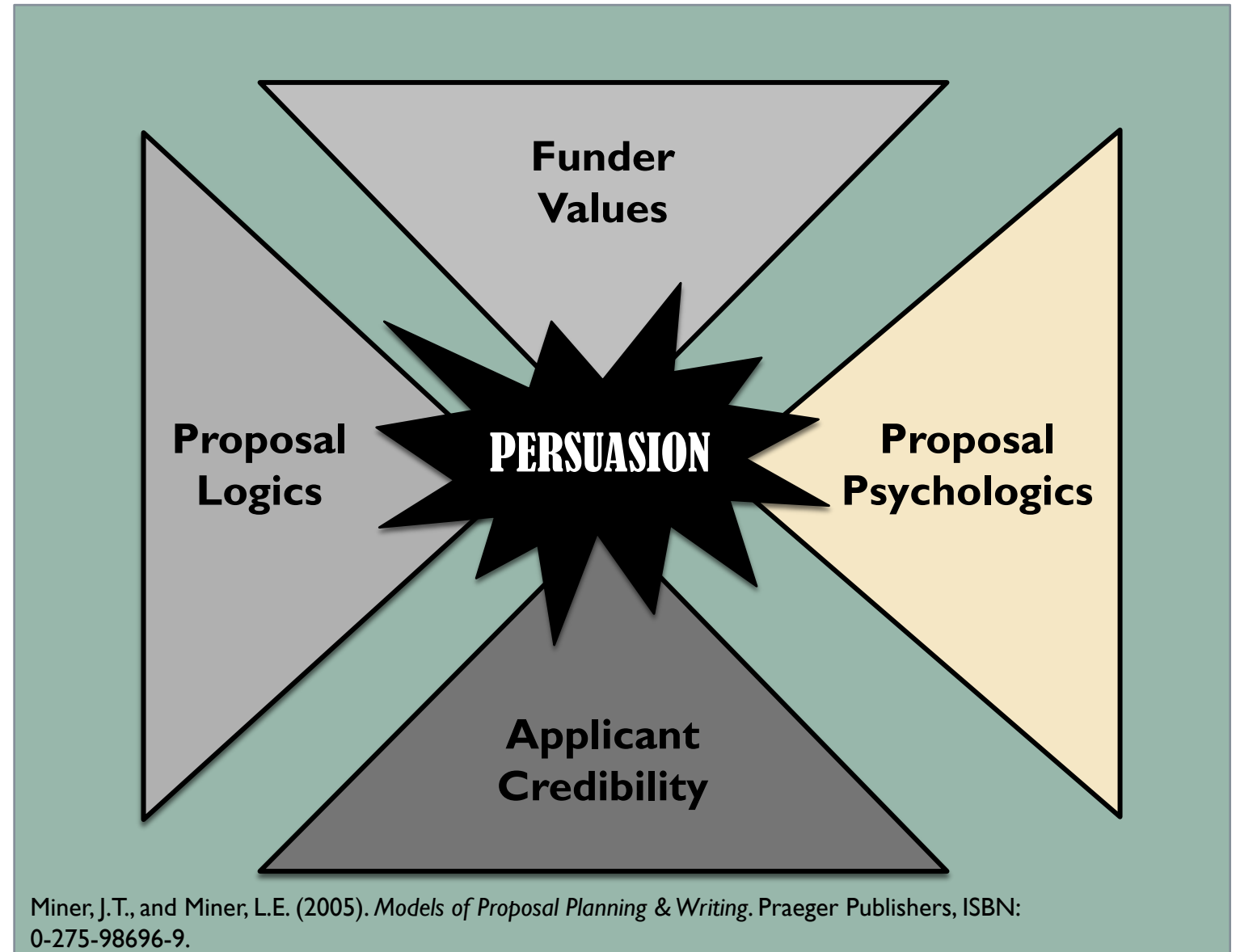- (Of a situation or event) to provide a sound reason for (someone) to do something.

per·sua·sion
suadere]
ing;
art of
getting what
you want
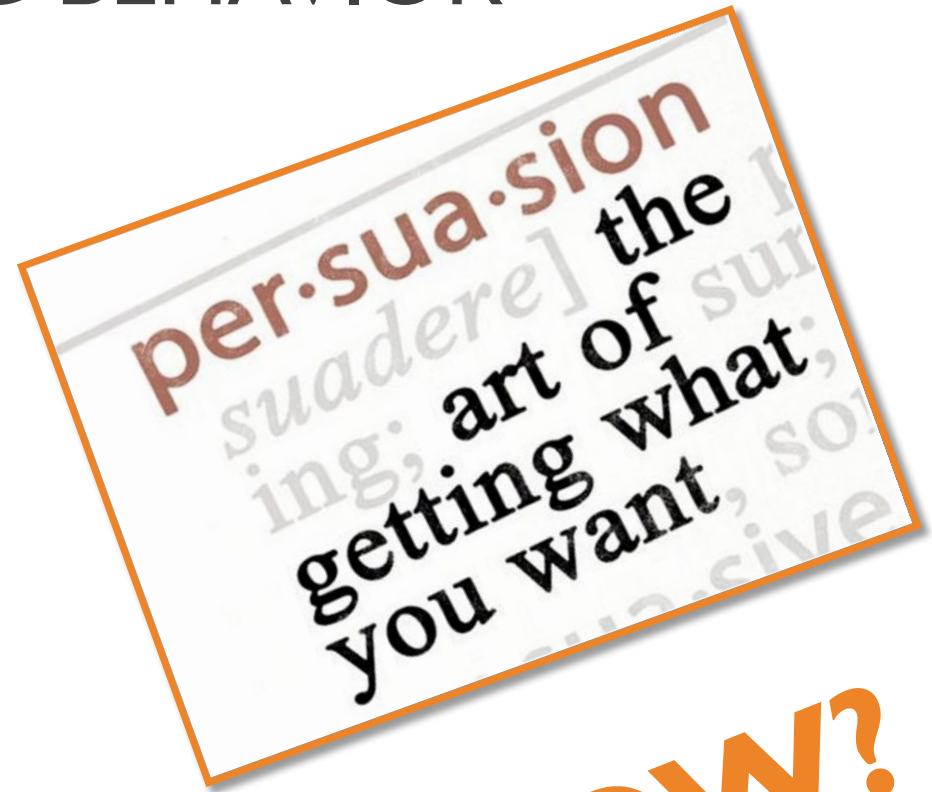
HOW?

1. Think through the eyes of the funder

2. Think through the eyes of the grant reviewer

THINK THROUGH THE EYES OF FUNDERS BY USING:

THE PERSUASION INTERSECTION

Miner, J.T., and Miner, L.E. (2005). *Models of Proposal Planning & Writing*. Praeger Publishers, ISBN: 0-275-98696-9.

FUNDER VALUES

- Their experiences

- Their perspectives

- Their priorities

It is our job to translate the funder's view so that we can adapt each of our individual proposals to each of the individual and unique views of each distinct funder!
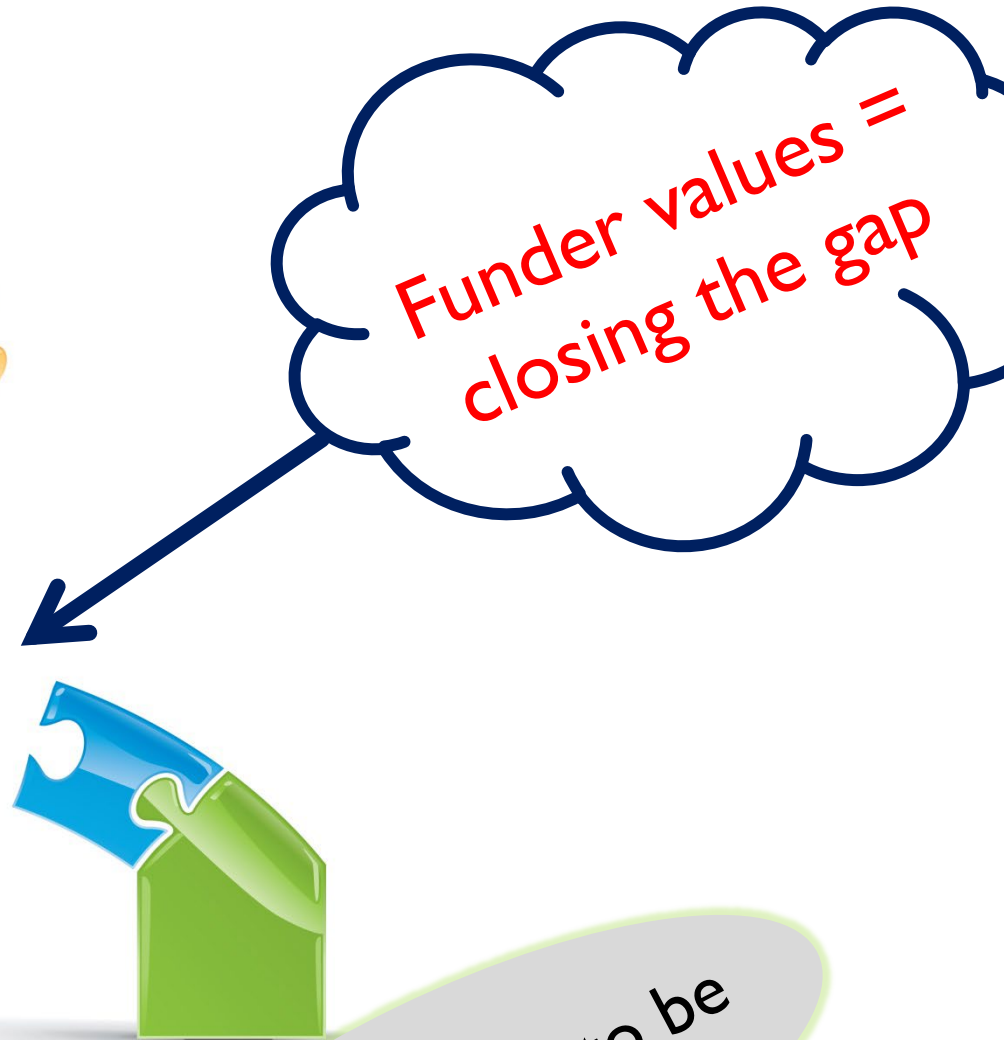
FUNDER'S VIEW OF THE WORLD

Childhood poverty…
- Employability skills
- Safety net services
- Kindergarten readiness
- Childcare subsidies

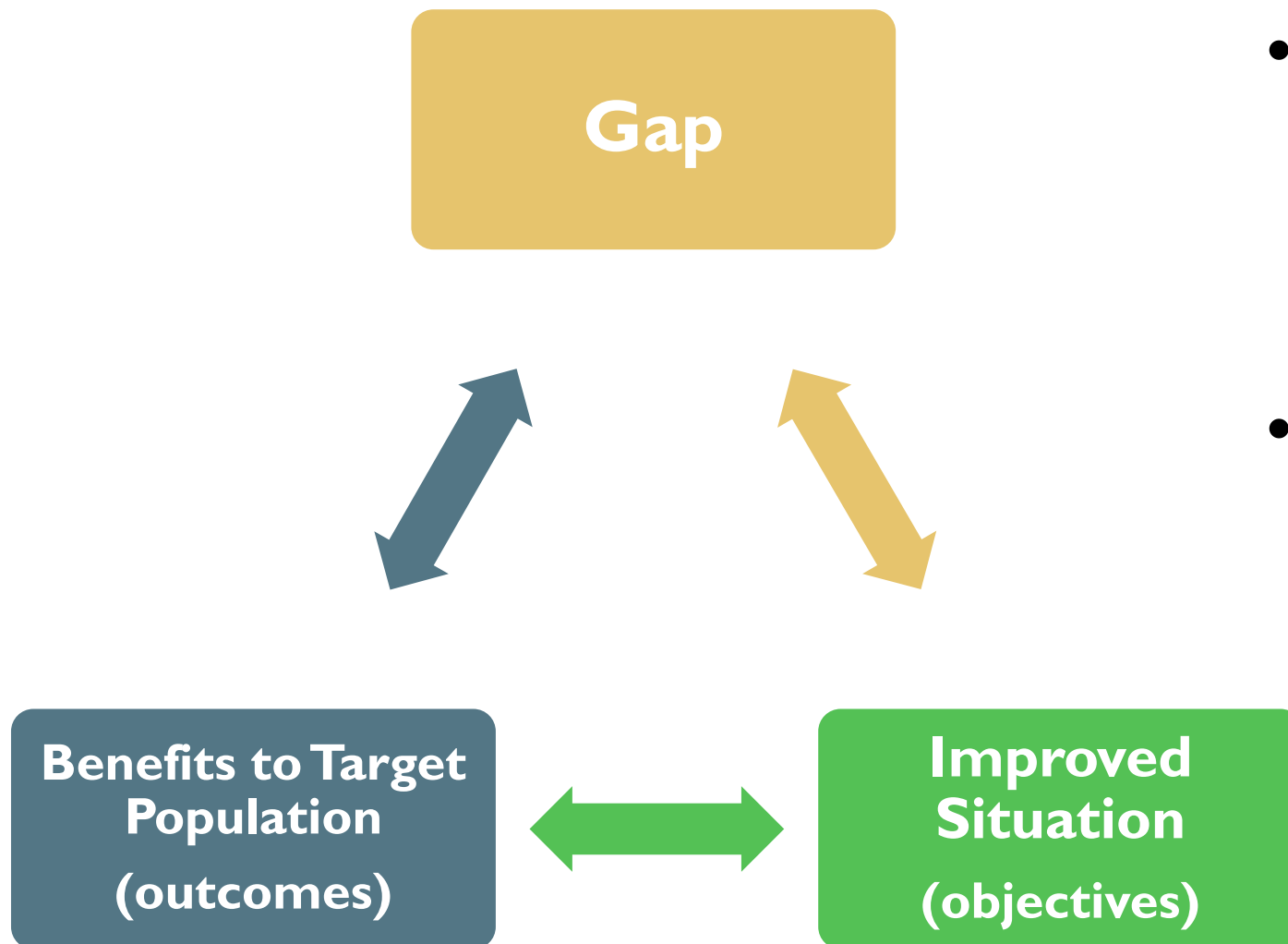## HOW?

Through prospect research!

Funder values = closing the gap

What is

What ought to be

PROPOSAL LOGICS

Gap

Benefits to Target Population (outcomes)

Improved Situation (objectives)

- Defines the funder's Return on Investment (ROI)

- ROIs are PERSUASIVE!

PROPOSAL PSYCHOLOGICS

- Respond to the emotional needs of the funder.

TRUST
ENERGY
PASSION
**OWNERSHIP**
COMMITMENT

But how?

What can we learn from the funder that will help us to shape these psychological experiences?

- Do they have a "favorite" organization to fund? If so, what makes them a favorite?

- Have they de-funded a particular service or changed their funding in a way to overcome obstacles in the past?

Go back and read a proposal you've written and ask yourself, "What have I said in this proposal that exudes…

- Trust? Energy? Passion? Ownership? Commitment?"

APPLICANT CREDIBILITY
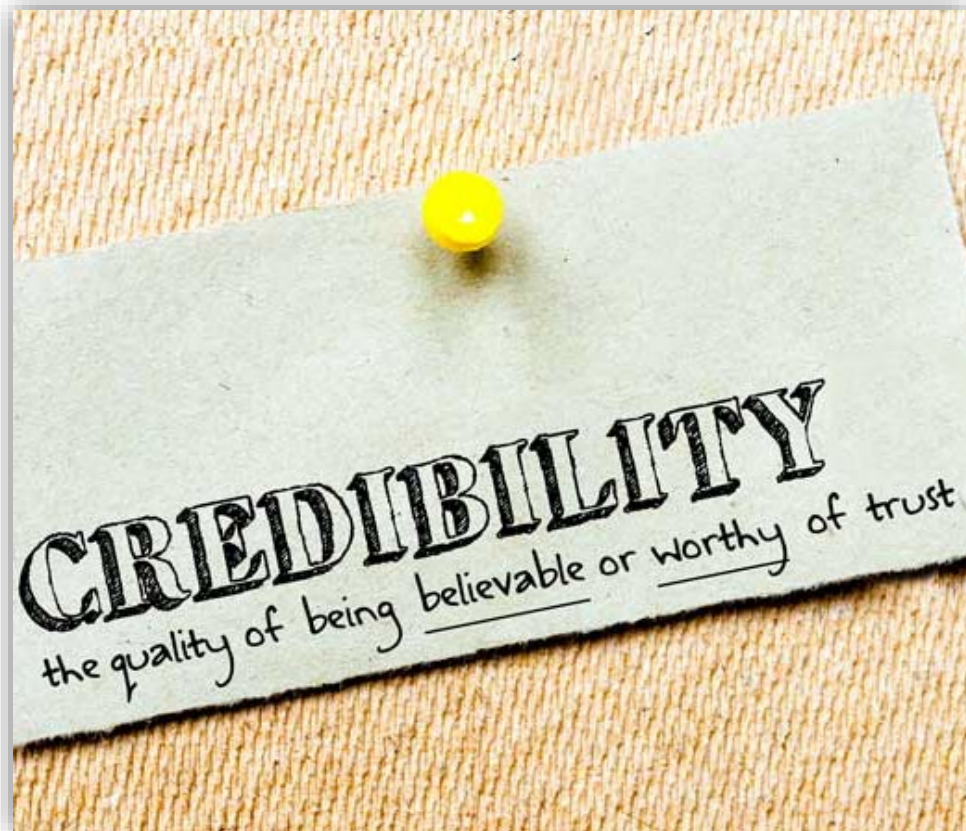
- Establish credibility:
  1. Organizational
  2. Individual
  3. Project

Funders NEED to trust you!!!

- Your job is to prove that you have a *credible* organization proposing a *credible* idea to be directed by *credible* project staff.

- Enhance your credibility by establishing your authority and your uniqueness.

WHERE DO YOU SEE:

TRUST?
ENERGY?
PASSION?
OWNERSHIP?
COMMITMENT?

For more than a decade, project partners have collaborated on a variety of grant-related initiatives, including a six-year joint teacher education program between the College of Native Americans and Midwestern Regional College. The project director has led several successful national intervention projects for Native American middle school students, including Kids Math Camp, Achievement in Math, and Math and Science Immersion. Each one of these projects has been sustained beyond the conclusion of its granting period through the generosity of individual philanthropy and in-kind contributions from partner institutions.

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SELF VERSUS FUNDER-ORIENTED NEEDS

| Self-Oriented Needs	Funder-Oriented Needs
The Family Welfare Agency requests a grant of $25,000 to meet its operating expenses.	The Family Welfare Agency invites your investment of $25,000 to sustain the delivery of crucial services to victims of violence and abuse.
Top Flite High School invites you to share in a $100,000 project to buy new computers.	Top Flite High School invites your participation in a $100,000 project to reduce student achievement gaps in science and mathematics.
La Casa de Esperanza requests your support of $50,000 to hire a case manager.	La Casa de Esperanza invites you to share in a $50,000 project to improve the quality of life for Hispanics with chronic health conditions.

THE GRANT REVIEWER'S EXPERIENCE

- LOTS of reading

- Tedium of scoring rubrics

- Comparative analyses

- Proposals not adhering to prescribed requirements

- HUH???

- NOT the most exciting topics!

Always remember the grant reviewer's RULE OF 12!

- The grant reviewer just worked 12 hours.

- It's 12:00 midnight.

- Your grant proposal is the 12th one in the pile!

THE GRANT REVIEWER'S EXPERIENCE

THE STRESS RESPONSE CURVE
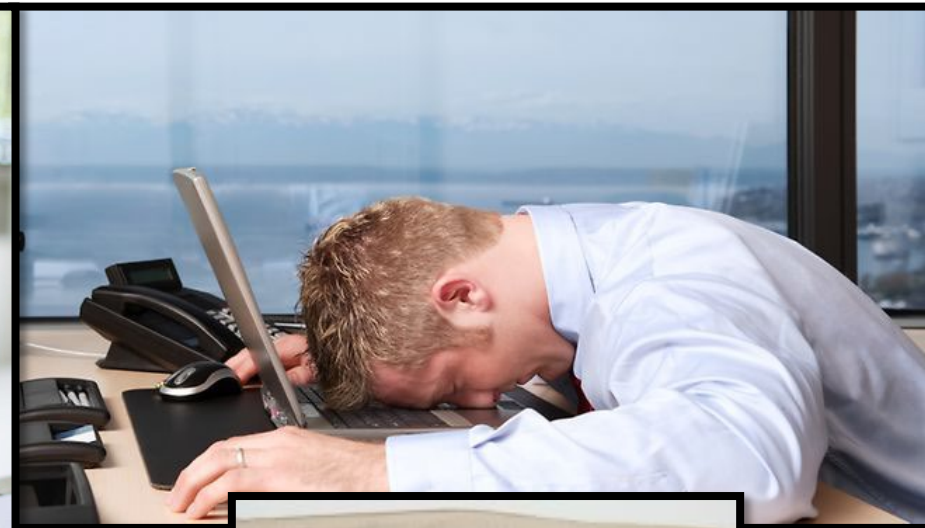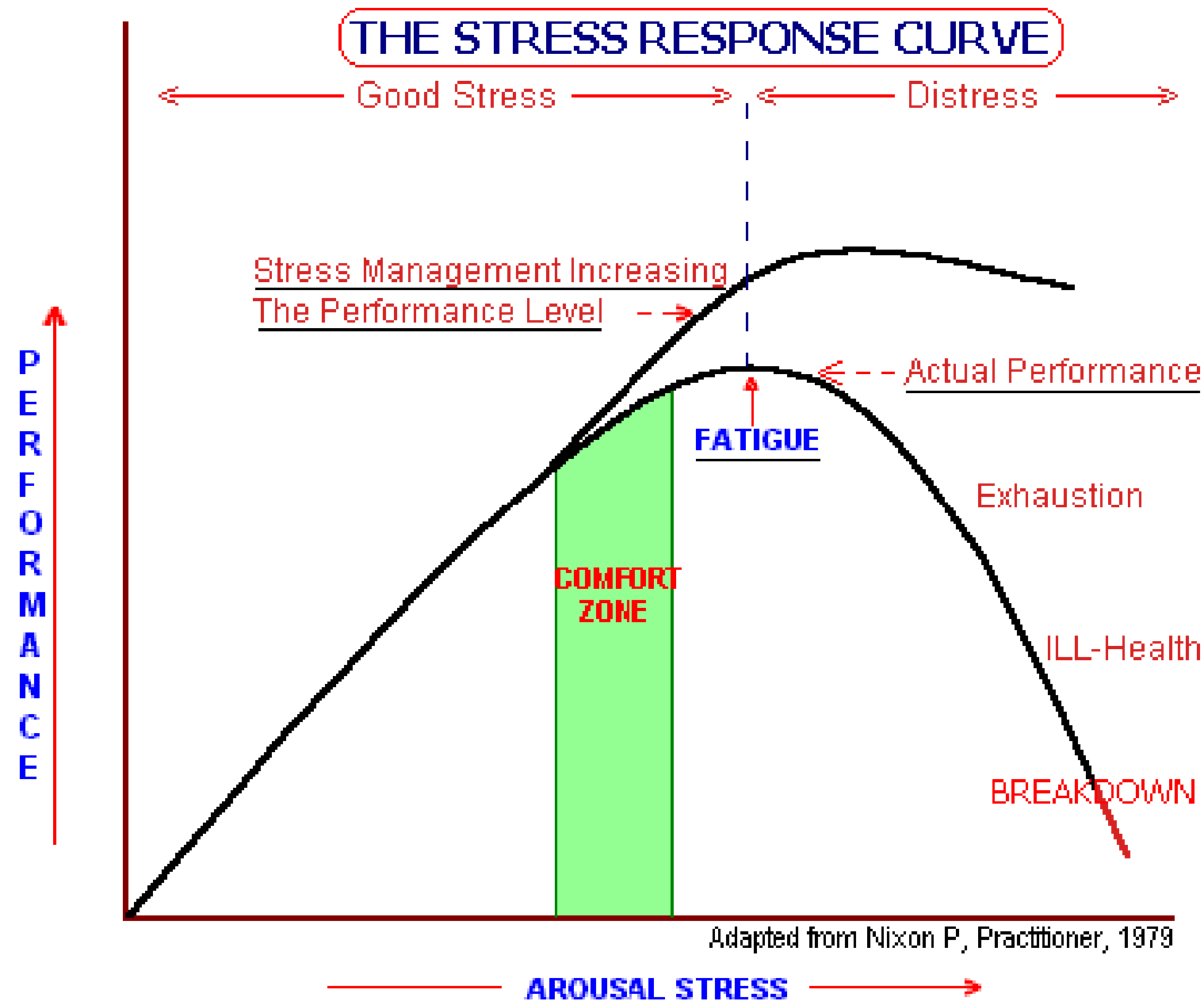
READABILITY

Readability is the ease with which a reader can understand a written text. The **readability** of text depends on:

Its content (the complexity of its vocabulary)

Its typography (font size, line height, and line length).

- Wikipedia

COMPLEXITY OF VOCABULARY

Aim your writing at a 9th grade level

In Microsoft Word, Flesch/Kincaid test (or Readability Statistics) rates text on a U.S. school grade level

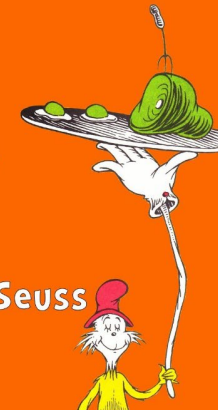Calculated by the average number of words per sentence and the average number of syllables per word

The book with one of the lowest scores to date averages 5.7 words per sentence and 1.02 syllables per word

Affordable Care Act

Green Eggs and Ham By Dr.Seuss

TYPOGRAPHY

- Defined as the style and appearance of printed matter

- 2 main types of font:
  - **Serif** – contains structural details that adorn the ends of the lines used to make up a letter or numeral
  - **Sans-serif** – a typeface without serifs

- Obviously follow the RFP

- But what if the RFP doesn't specify?

The small decorative pieces on the ends of each character are called Serifs
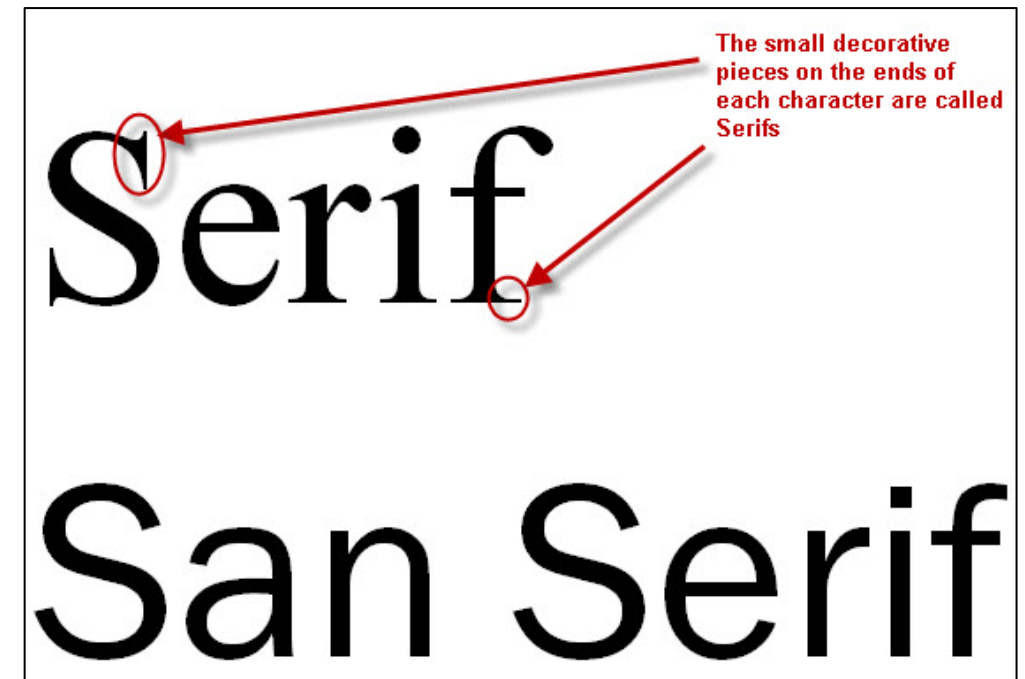
Serif

San Serif

WHICH IS EASIER TO READ?

- **Popular serif fonts:**
  - Times New Roman
  - Palatino
  - Georgia
  - Bookman
  - Garamond

- **Popular sans-serif fonts:**
  - Arial
  - Calibri
  - Century Gothic
  - Gill Sans
  - Verdana

Arial font example:

- l = This is a lower case "L"
- I = This is an upper case "I"

- **Serif fonts** are easier to read because the added strokes make each character more distinctive. More distinctive letters are easier for the eye to recognize quickly.

HEADINGS AND SUBHEADINGS

- Makes the important information stand out

- **Bold**, *italics*, <u>underline</u>, or any combination

- Helps the reviewers to transition from one section to another

- Use the language that is used in the RFP

- If there is a scoring rubric, use that language

DRAW THE EYES TO IMPORTANT INFORMATION…

- Bold/italics/underlining – when reading (and even more so, when skimming), your eyes will gravitate to those words that stand out

- Use this strategically…

Transition aged youth (TAY) were chosen for this project due to their significant risk factors in the catchment area. In the greater Dayton metropolitan area between 2008 and 2014, 5% of the TAY who were either treated in local Emergency Rooms or released from admission were diagnosed with mental health related conditions. *This rate nearly doubles for the same population in the catchment area.*

WOW!!

IMPROVE READABILITY BY ADDING WHITE SPACE THROUGH CHUNKING

HOW DOES THIS MAKE YOU FEEL?

Most grant professionals know they have to be persuasive in their proposal writing, but what really persuades a grantmaker to choose one proposal over another? In this session, attendees will learn the about the *persuasion intersection* – the convergence where grantseeker and grantmaker values collide. Coined by Jeremy and Lynn Miner, this model helps us connect with grant reviewers by appealing to both the head and the heart - the logic and the emotion – for truly powerful proposals. Attendees will learn about the "roads" to the persuasion intersection. This transitions the learning experience from theoretical to practical application by providing specific guidelines that enhance the persuasiveness of proposal writing. Lastly, the correlation of readability and persuasiveness will be explored. We not only read logically with our eyes, but also psychologically and with emotion. Tips will be provided about how to strategically appeal to the psychological experience of grant reviewers. Learning objectives: 1) Theoretical understanding of the Persuasion Intersection Model; 2) Key methods for getting to the persuasion intersection; 3) Finding mutually beneficial relationships between grantseeker and grantmaker; and 4) Conveying ideas that meet both the logical and emotional qualities of grant reviewers. GPC competencies: Knowledge of organizational development as it pertains to grant seeking - Attendees will learn about the persuasive characteristic of applicant credibility; Knowledge of strategies for effective program and project design and development-The model calls these "proposal logics"; Knowledge of how to craft, construct, and submit an effective grant application–This is one of the "roads" to the persuasion intersection; Knowledge of methods and strategies that cultivate and maintain relationships between fund-seeking and recipient organizations and funders-Finding the intersection of mutually beneficial relationships is at the heart of this presentation. The following GPC competencies will be addressed in this session: Knowledge of organizational development as it pertains to grant seeking. Knowledge of strategies for effective program and project design and development. Knowledge of how to craft, construct, and submit an effective grant application. Knowledge of methods and strategies that cultivate and maintain relationships between fund-seeking and recipient organizations and funders; Ability to write a convincing case for funding.

USE CHUNKING TO IMPROVE READABILITY…

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4. Conveying ideas that meet both the logical and emotional qualities of grant reviewers.

Persuasion:

The act of influencing an audience.

An act of power.

DO WHAT I WANT YOU TO DO!

Think through the eyes of your funders!

Think through the eyes of your grant reviewers!

CITATIONS

- Jeffrey, R. (Rev. 2016). *About Writing: A guide*. Open Oregon Educational Resources. Retrieved from https://openoregon.pressbooks.pub/aboutwriting/chapter/types-of-writing-styles/#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20main%20types,used%20for%20a%20specific%20purpose.

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THANK YOU

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