



OST GLOBAL SOLUTIONS



Writing Persuasive Federal Proposals

Day 2

OST Bid & Proposal Academy
Course

www.ostglobalsolutions.com

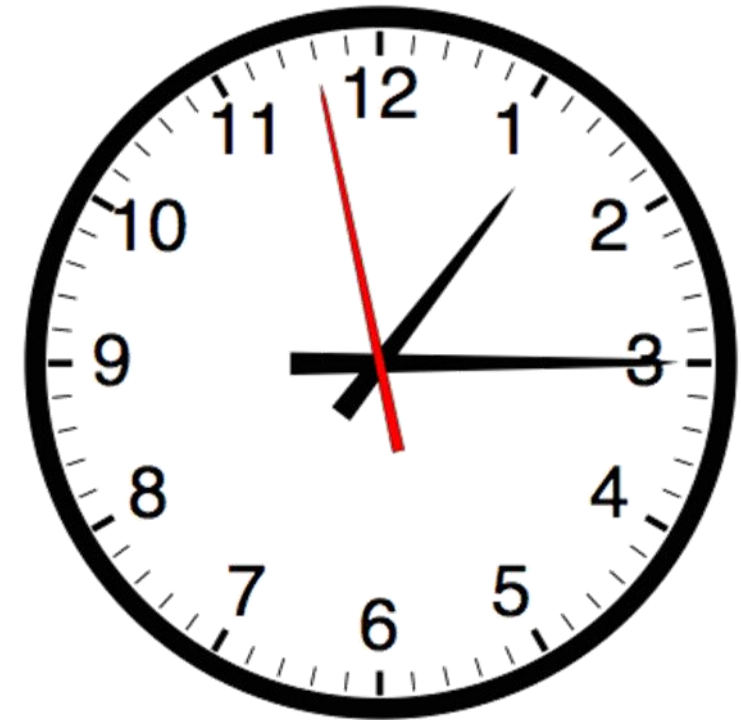
Agenda



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- 09:00 – 10:30 AM Training
- 10:30 – 10:45 AM Break
- 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM Training
- 12:00 – 01:00 PM Lunch Break
- 01:00 PM – 02:45 PM Training
- 02:45 PM – 03:00 PM Break
- 03:00 PM – 04:00 PM Training
- 04:00 PM – 05:00 PM Flex



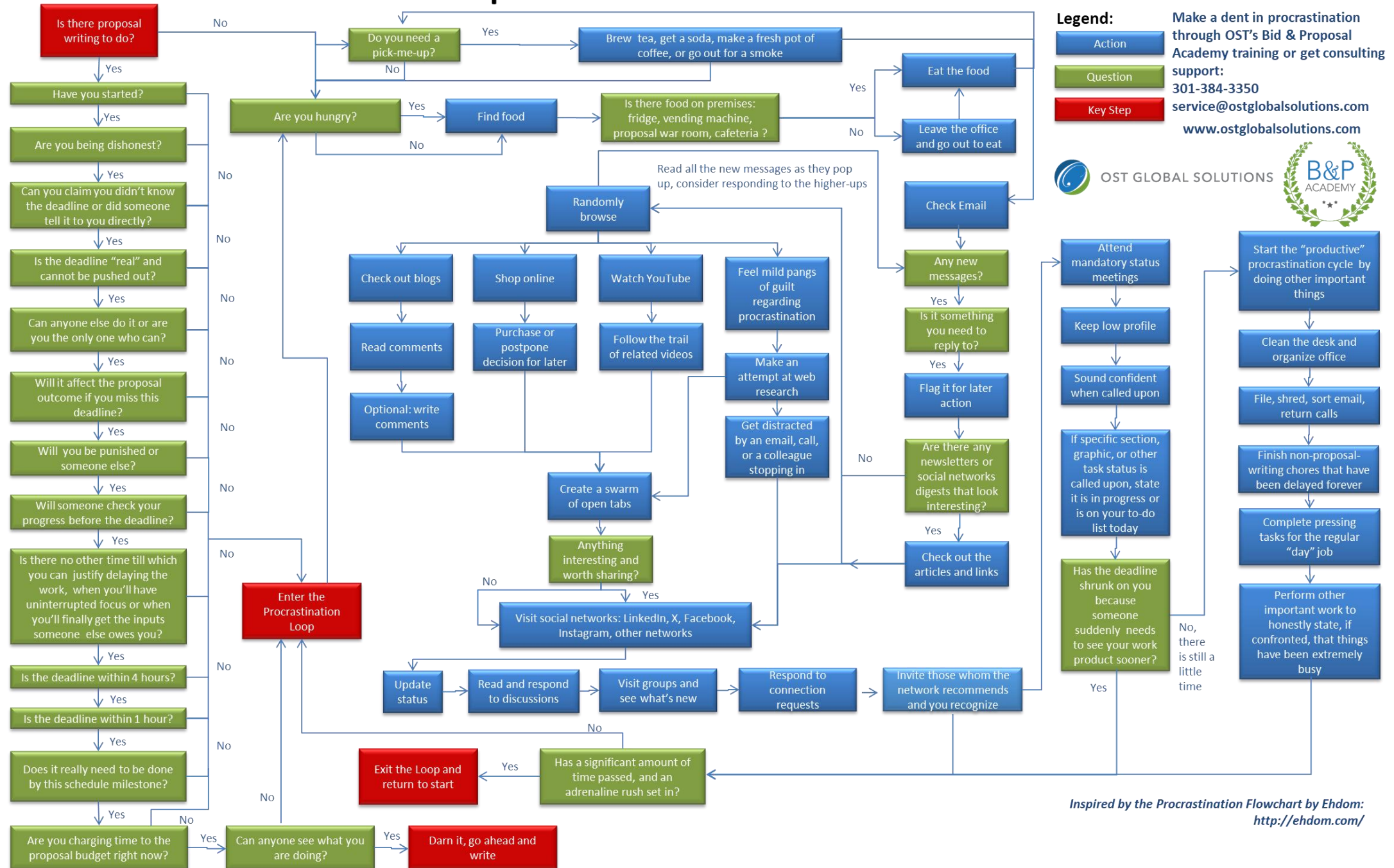
Please, give yourself the benefit of focus and limit email and use of cell phones to breaks



Module 10

Overcoming the Writer's Block

Proposal Procrastination Flowchart



Inspired by the Procrastination Flowchart by Ehdom:
<http://ehdom.com/>

So, How Do You Break Free from the Writer's Block and Even Help Your Proposal Team?



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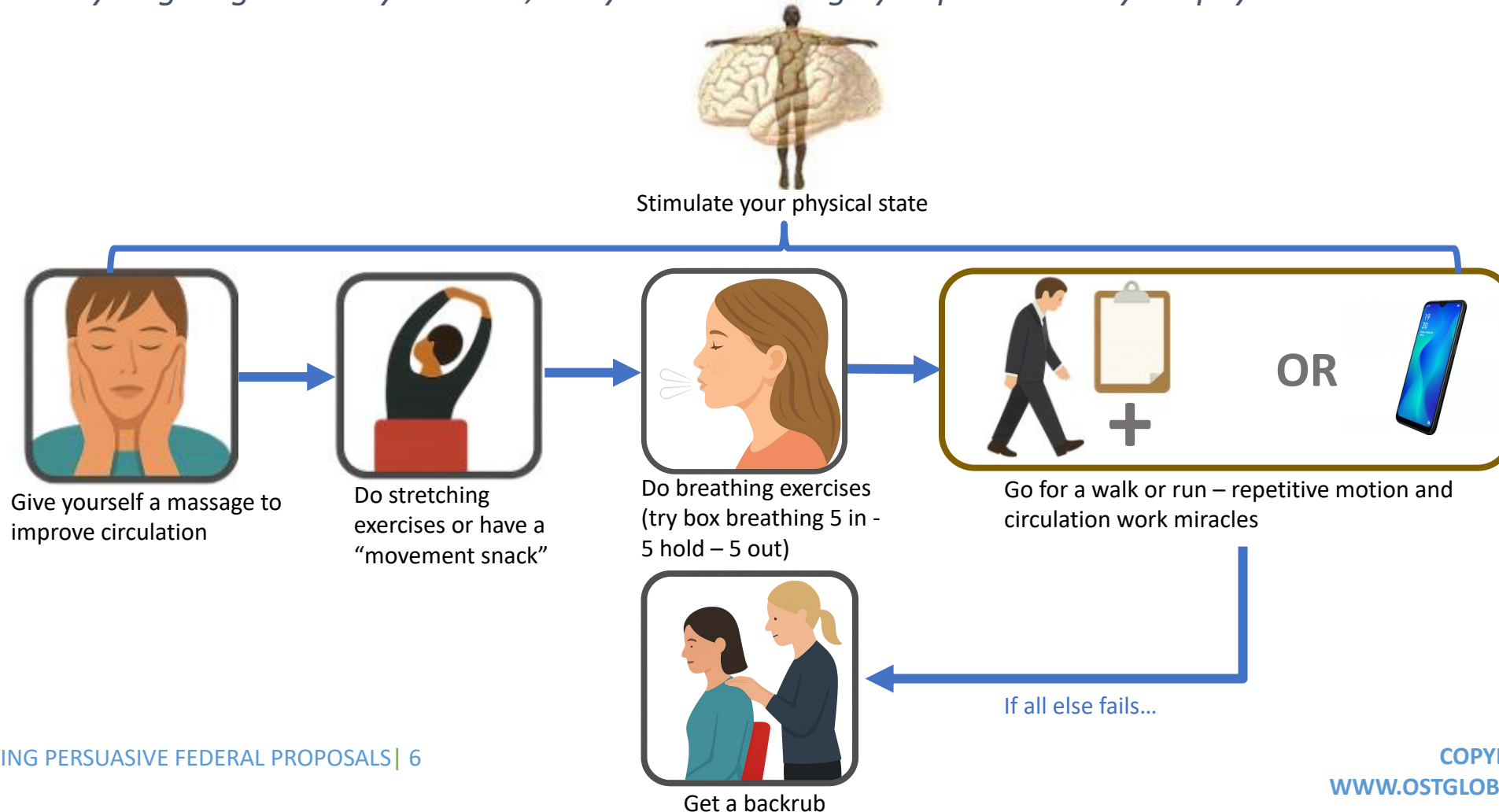
Take Advantage of the Mind-Body Connection



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It is easy to get “glued” to your desk, but your mind is highly dependent on your physical state



Do Not Succumb to Going Stir-Crazy



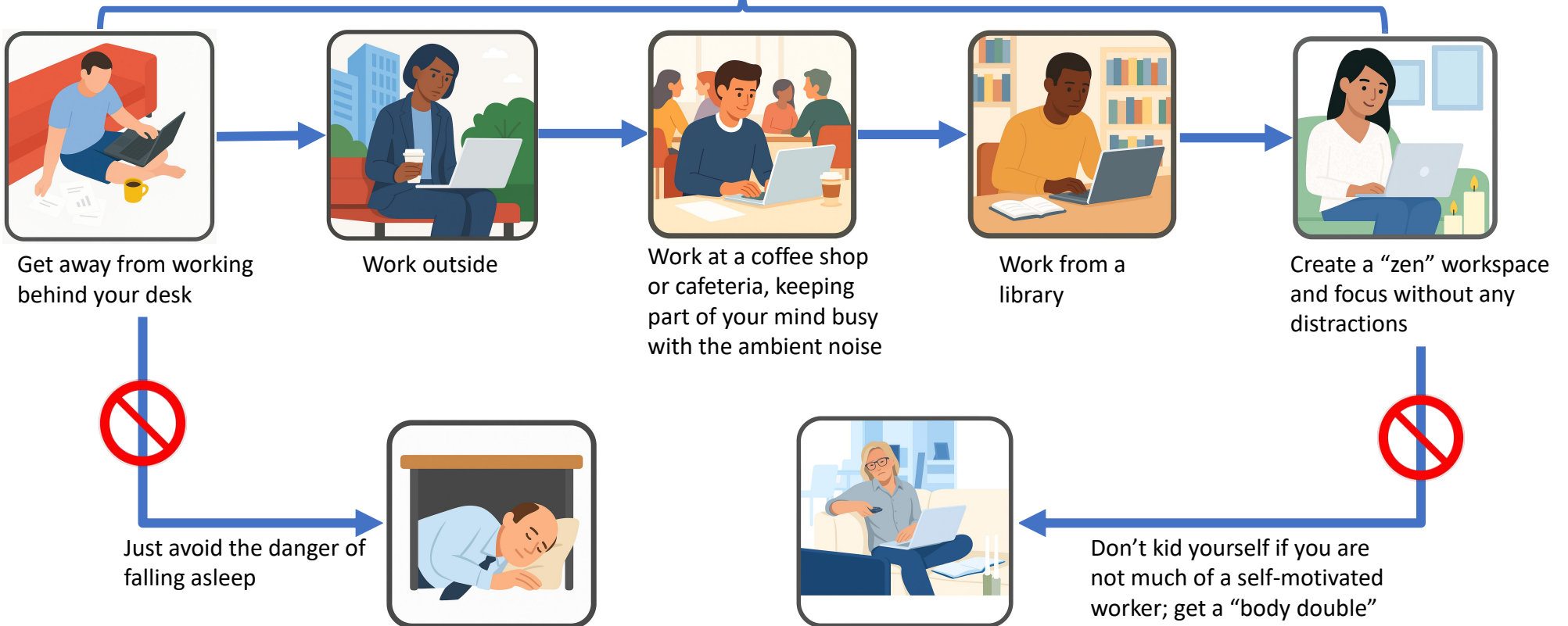
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Changing the environment is your friend if you are stuck



Get away from the routine



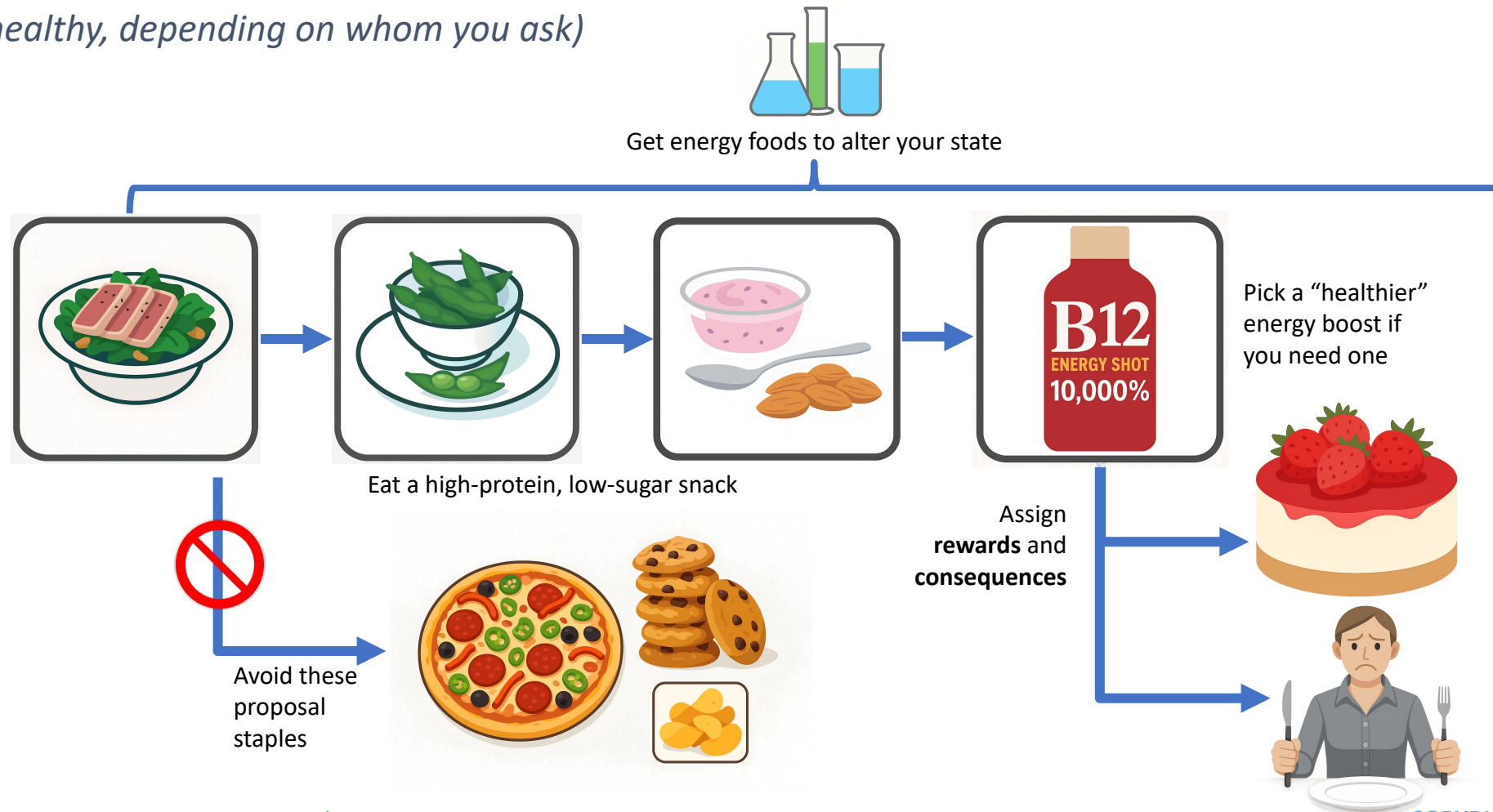
Alter Your Blood Chemistry the Healthy Way



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(Or almost healthy, depending on whom you ask)



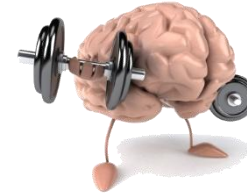
Trick Your Mind that You Are Not Writing a Proposal



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Believe it or not, playing tricks on your mind really works – especially for highly intelligent people like you!



Controlling your own mind is a serious strength



Manage Your Writing Time

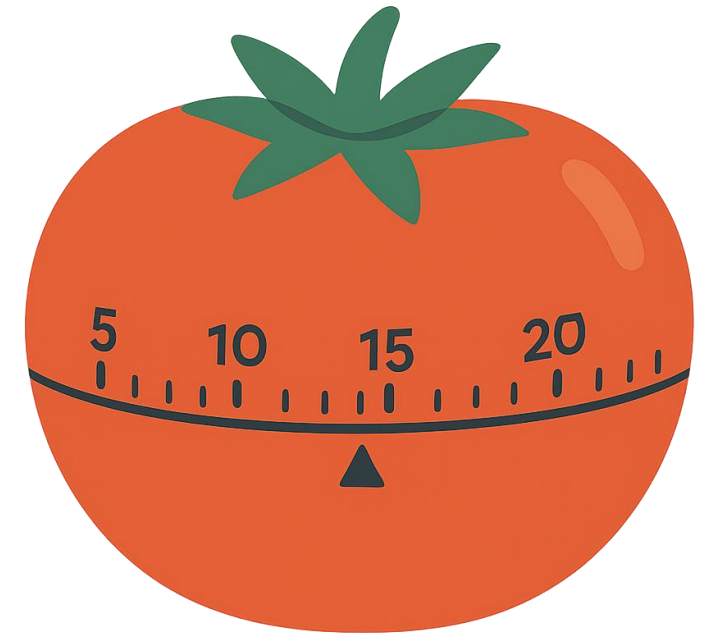


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Purchase a simple kitchen timer, or use a timer app on your laptop or smart phone; a kitchen timer ticks so it may be a helpful extra cue for you to hurry up and write

- Stop dreading proposal writing because it should NOT take you hours
- Productive writing is done in smaller chunks of time
- 15-20-minute intervals work best for intense writing without checking email or answering phone calls
- It is another way to trick your mind
 - You will have an easier time starting since it's no longer a daunting task
 - Sometimes you will not want to stop because you will be too into it





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Please, Complete an Assignment
for **Module 10** Prior to Proceeding
to the Next Module

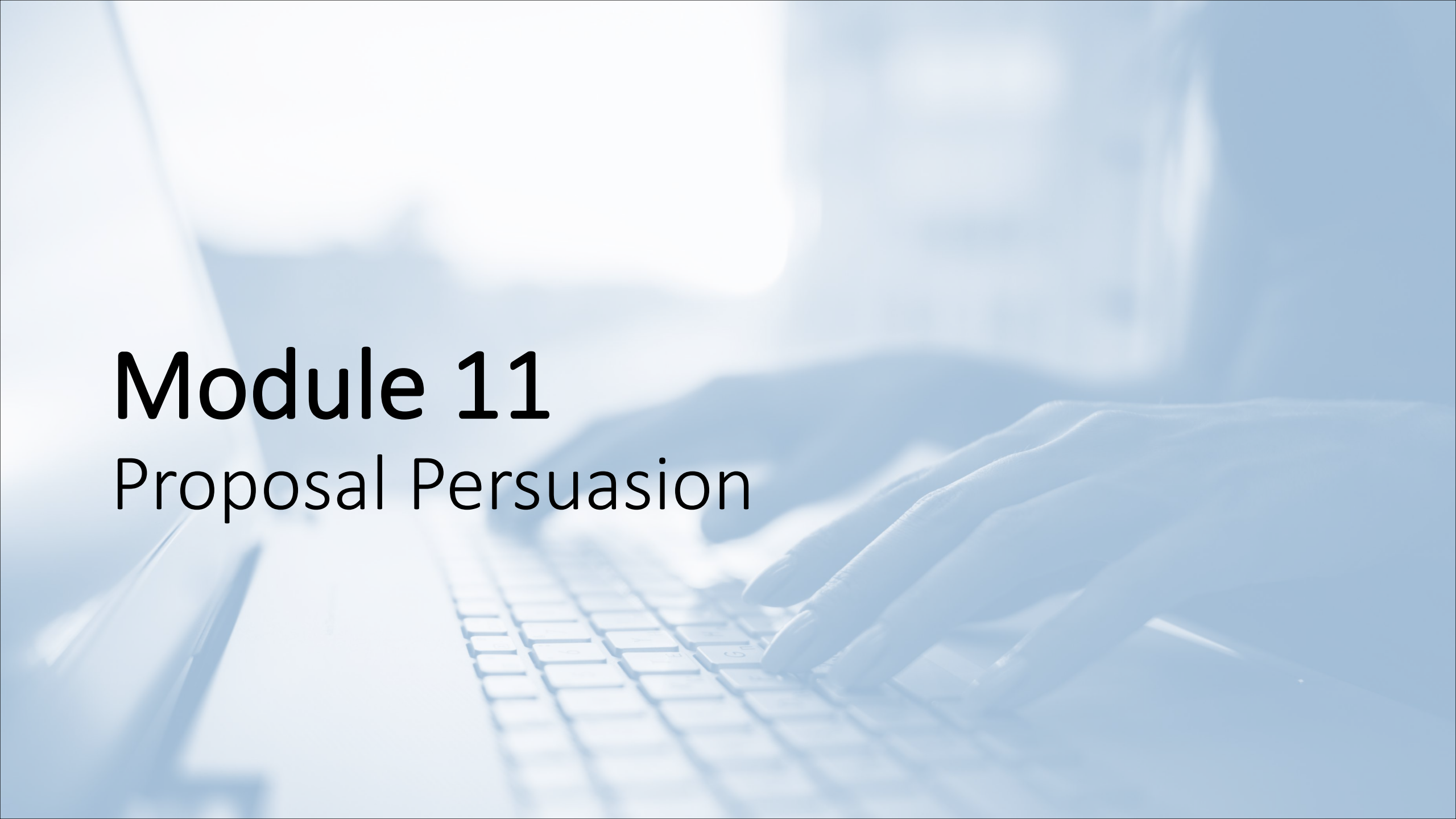
Module 10 Quiz



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1. **True or False?** The rhythm of the repetitive movement of walking helps us relax our mental state, which in turn helps us overcome the writer's block.
a. True b. False
2. **What is NOT helpful to combatting writer's block?**
 - a) Finding a place to work that's different than one's desk.
 - b) Eating a rich, calorie-packed meal followed by a sweet dessert.
 - c) Doing breathing exercises and stretches.
 - d) Working at a treadmill desk.
 - e) Postponing work until the inspiration hits.
 - f) b and e.



Module 11

Proposal Persuasion

The Art of Persuasion is Based in Neuroscience

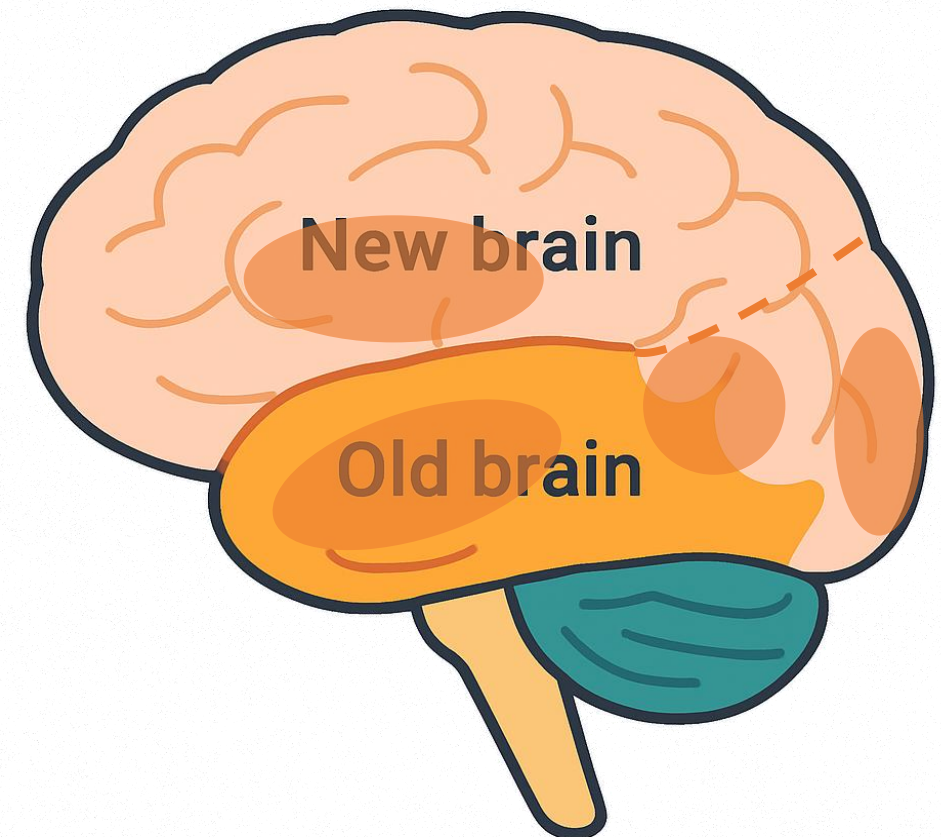


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Most proposals bore to tears, annoy through excessive bragging, or insult with a tutorial on something the customer already knows – but fail to persuade

- The “**Old brain**” (reptilian + limbic systems) controls survival-driven, fast decisions; the “**New brain**” (neocortex) handles analysis and logic
- People are emotional buyers: the old brain makes the buying decision quickly
- People with damage to the part of the frontal lobe that processes emotions (or “listens” to them) often struggle with making even routine decisions
 - That’s with IQ, memory, learning, language, and other capacities intact!
- Logic is there to justify the emotional decision, to different degrees with different people and cultures
- Much of the traffic between the old and modern parts of our brains is devoted to the conscious calculation of risks and rewards, relying on past experiences
- Prestige, security, and career are at stake
- Key drivers are the desire for gain and fear of consequence and failure; the fear is a much stronger driver



Let's Dive into the Human Brain



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Back claims with data and logic but put this after emotional hook.

Prefrontal Cortex: Rationalizes emotional decisions. Manages emotional and social behavior, and controls thinking and decision-making. Solves problems creatively. Shortest-term memory resides in the frontal lobe.

Guide evaluator focus: use layout, headers, and early priming to tell evaluators what to pay attention to. Make relevance unmistakable.

Hypothalamus: Regulates hormones and emotions. Drives urgency and motivations—especially tied to reward, pleasure, status, safety, and risk avoidance. Filters sensory input and prioritizes what to focus on.

Strike the right tone through the “right proposal language.” Improve proposal readability. Tell stories and use metaphoric language.

Temporal Lobe: Understands sounds, language, and stores memories. This is where language meets meaning. Involved in comprehending stories resulting in high persuasion.

Open with WHY, preferably focused on the **threat of loss or missed opportunity** to activate attention.

Amygdala (Limbic): Processes **fear, threat**, and **emotional memory**; evaluates threats and guides gut reactions before logic kicks in.

Repeat win themes, be consistent in text and graphics treatment, use consistent proof points, use the project team the customer knows and likes.

Basal Ganglia: Loves consistency, repetition, familiarity, comfort in habit and routine.

Use compelling visuals including graphics, tables, focus boxes, and layout.

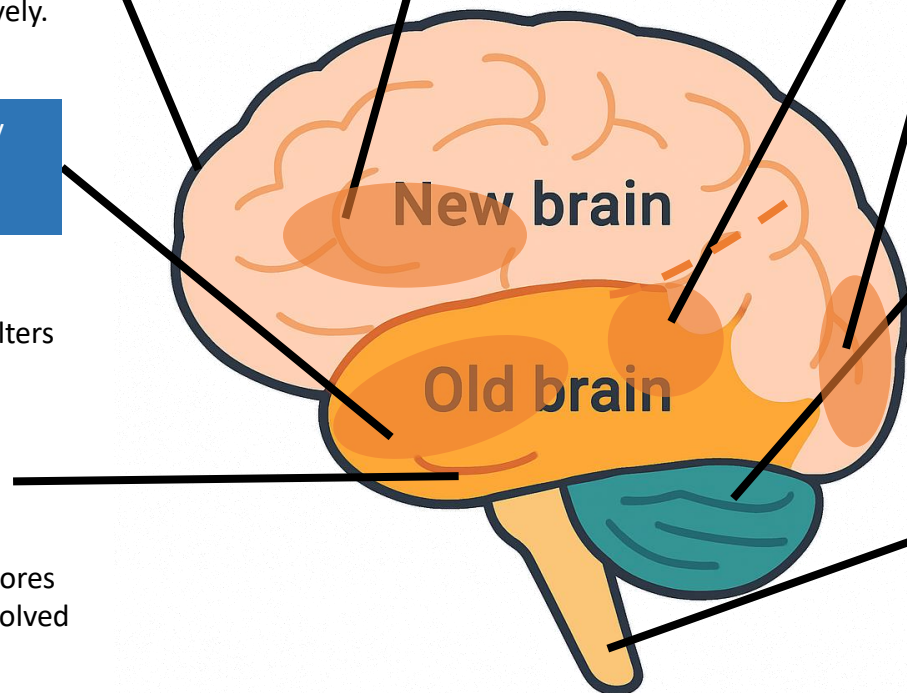
Occipital Lobe: Processes and makes sense of visuals - graphics.

Use past performance stories, success case studies, lessons learned, and familiar customer-centric vocabulary and imagery.

Hippocampus: Bridges old brain and long-term memory. Influences decisions based on past experiences and success stories.

Address risk reduction proactively. Don't overwhelm—**chunk** your message and maintain visual clarity.

Brainstem: Triggers the **fight, flight, freeze, or fawn** response in high-stress or life-threatening situations. Too much clutter fatigues evaluators.



Understanding Your Customer's Motivating Factors



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Neuroscience and neuromarketing are highly relevant to writing proposals

- Government evaluation board is composed of individual people with different drivers
- Unconscious mind – not conscious mind – drives how evaluators respond to proposal content **outside compliance**
- Underlying issues will drive people to emot on specific subjects they find particularly near and dear: we must understand everyone's hot buttons:
 - Hopes
 - Fears
 - Biases
- We must also understand the underlying emotional drivers
- Satisfying people's drivers, while not setting off "alarms" in their head is key to persuasion

Drivers

- Cost, risk, schedule
- Compliance with regulations
- Customer satisfaction
- Quality
- Public welfare
- Leaving a legacy
- Competitive positioning
- Thoroughness
- Formality
- Innovation
- Reputation
- Politics
- Career and personal goals
- Organizational goals and priorities, etc.

Proposal Language: What Sells

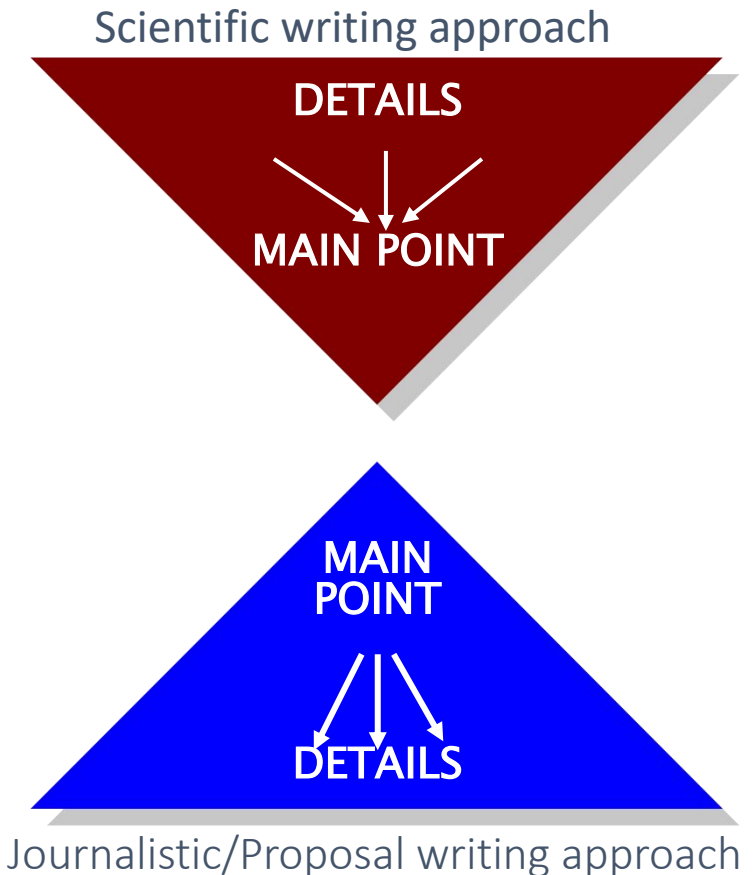


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Customer knowledge comes first, but skillful writing will translate this knowledge into a winning proposal

- Matching the solution with the customer's requirements and vision
- Journalistic method of writing applied to proposals (grab the reader with the main point first)
- Speaking customer's language
- Win themes with targeted features and benefits, and a clear value proposition
- Use of graphics
- Stories, with visual or written metaphors
- Overwhelming proof and clear facts
- Correct tone – sincere, confident, credible



Proper Structure of the Argument (Recap)



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Here is how the psychology of persuasion works and why the Ws are ordered the way they are

Higher level summary sections - X or X.X outline levels

Why: Customer problem, challenge, or key risk factor behind the requirement

What: What do we propose to do in response to the requirement?

Who: Who exactly is going to do this part of work, by name and title?

How: Step-by-step approach with benefits to the customer and risk mitigation

When: In what sequence we are going to do it per schedule, or when have we done it before?

Where: Indicate the location or facility, or say where we have done it before successfully

Wow: Powerful section conclusion

Generates curiosity, scares, or shows deep understanding

Provides the answer rather than restating the requirement

Gives specifics rather than passive voice, your company's name, or a generic "we"

Builds confidence in that you know what you are doing

Provides more details or builds proof

Provides more details or builds proof

Brings your point home



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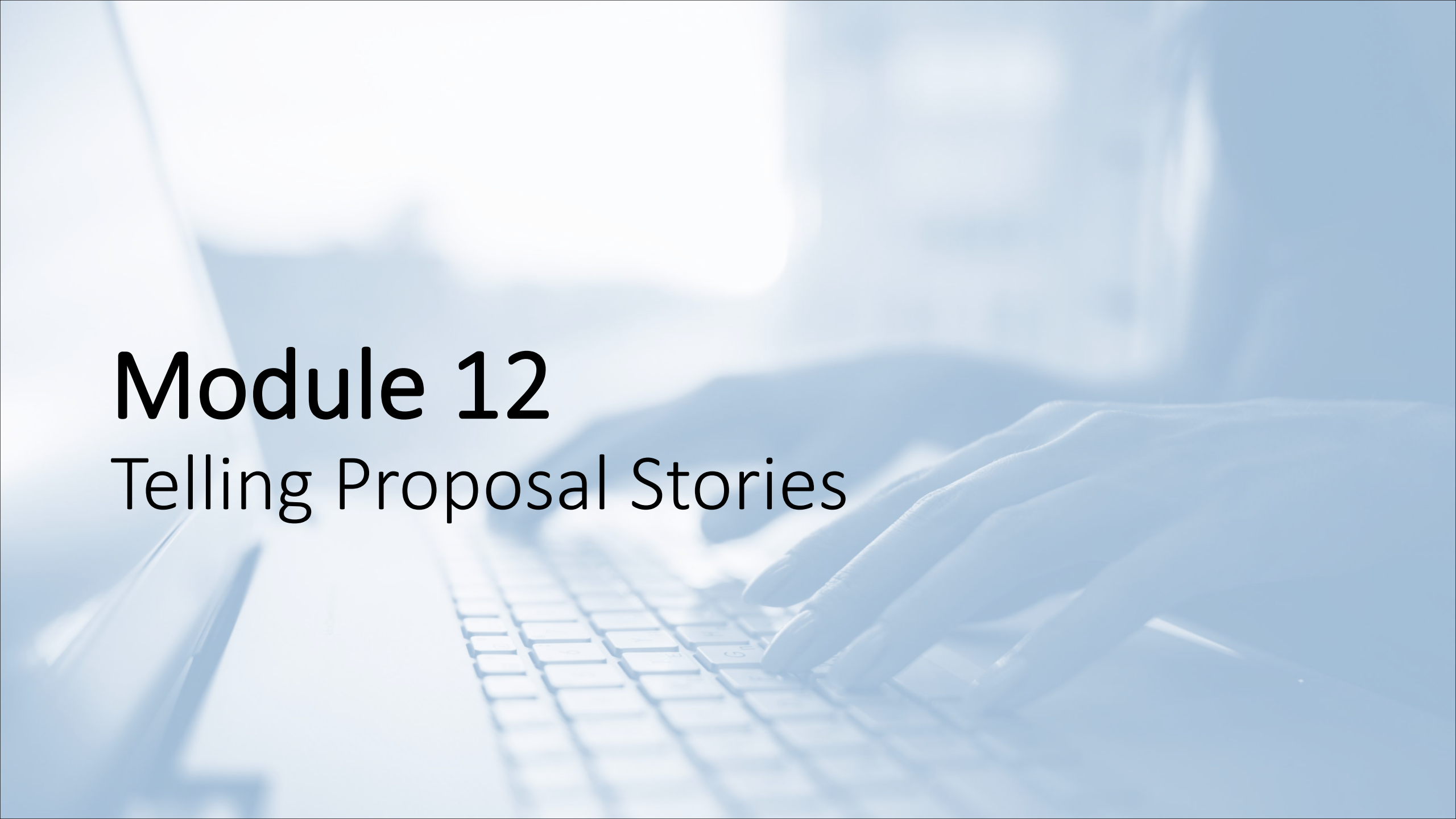
Module 11 Quiz



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1. Evaluators will use pure logic and reasoning to score your proposals as there is no room for feelings and emotions in the field of proposal evaluation.
a) True b) False
2. Journalistic writing means:
a) Main point first, details last.
b) Details first, main point last.
3. Put the Ws in the order of a persuasive argument:
 1. _____ a. What
 2. _____ b. Why
 3. _____ c. How
 4. _____ d. Who
 5. _____ e. Where
 6. _____ f. Wow
 7. _____ g. When



Module 12

Telling Proposal Stories

Story Makes Boring Proposal Writing Come Alive



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Many can't think of how to tell stories in proposals – yet a good story could become what differentiates your proposal from all the others an evaluator reads

- It is all about a **good story** in modern marketing and sales
- Every story must have 3 parts or it's boring:
 1. **Beginning – where, when, who**
 - In a kingdom far, far away, a long time ago, a beautiful princess...
 2. **Complication (challenge, problem, risk)**
 - Was thrown in a tower by an old wizard and guarded by a dragon
 3. **Favorable resolution**
 - A handsome prince slayed the dragon, rescued her, they fell in love, and lived happily ever after
- Look for real life applicable anecdotes: interview project personnel
- Mind map to develop a **lead sentence** to hook in the readers



Types of Stories You Can Tell in a Proposal



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Proposal stories work best when all the stories and their elements reinforce and build on each other, and all lead to the same conclusion – to select you

- If you are an incumbent, use “horror” stories scaring the customer into selecting you – show how things would break down if it weren’t for you
- For types of proposal that have to do with health, safety, or security, try drama and tension – the story in the beginning with the outcome towards the end, using your solution
- Tragedy could be why you are passionate about what you do or a lessons learned story and how it made you stronger and better fit for the project than any other competitor



More Proposal Stories



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Be very careful not to insult customer's own management and don't claim all the credit if the customer helped

- Anecdotes on past performance – what happened on a similar project in similar circumstances may be the inspiring story of overcoming challenges, and triumphing over the hardest of circumstances
- In an executive summary or throughout the proposal when describing the solution, you may want to use one of the techniques that pertains to science fiction: describe a future result of your work that transforms the customer
- Try the “before” and “after” story
- In a research and development proposal, it may be a mystery – defining the challenging problem and showing how you could find the solution



And More...

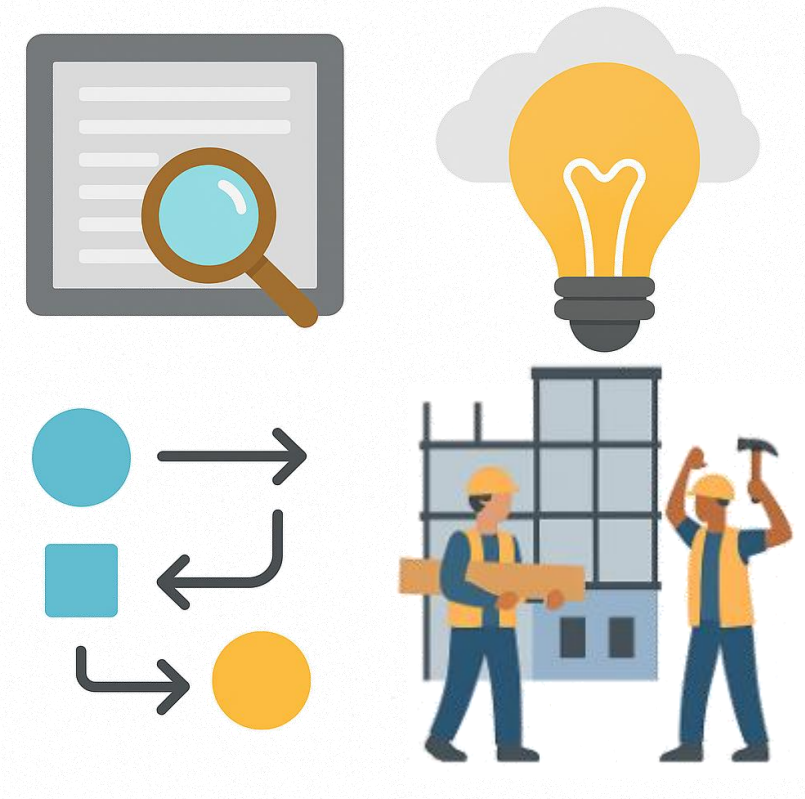


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Be as creative as you can and don't hesitate to experiment

- A case study with anecdotes and examples
- A hypothetical example demonstrating the application of your solution
- A story about what some of the steps in your process mean, why they are necessary in the first place, or how come you have added them – what problems are they meant to prevent?
- A positioning story of you versus your competitors – where do you stack against them, and how you are better
- A strong metaphor – a comparison with something similar to illustrate a point





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Please, Complete an Assignment
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Module 12 Exercise: What Story Could You Tell?



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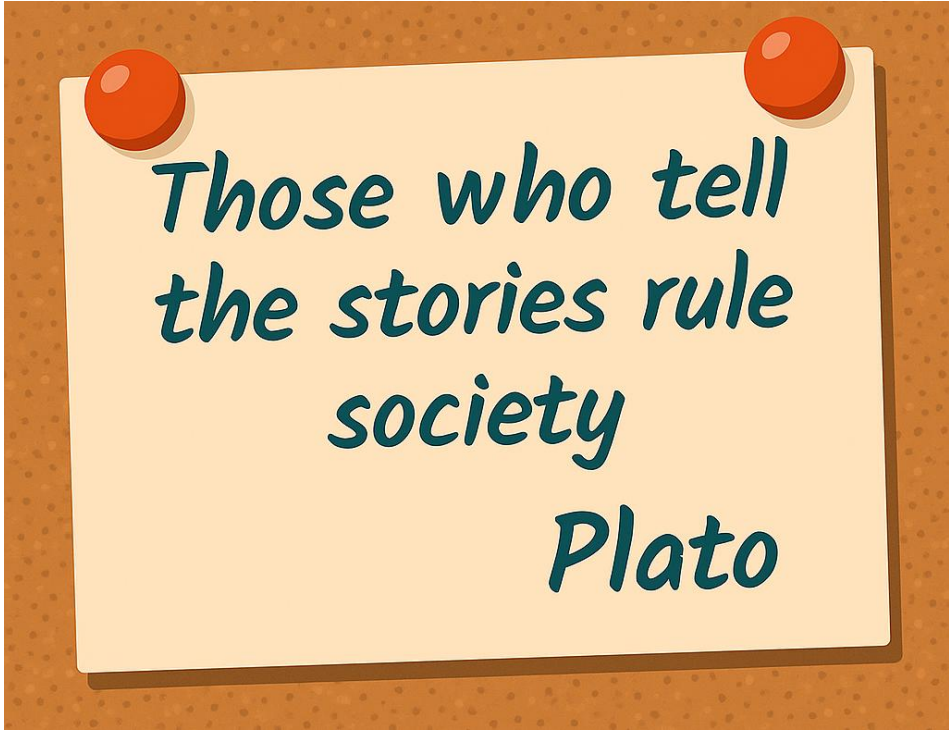


This exercise has two parts: a warmup remembering the stories you told in proposals before (one per group is enough) and then getting creative and developing a story for your practice section.

- Discussion:

1. What stories have you told before on proposals?
2. What story could you tell in your practice section?

Email your response to
service@ostglobalsolutions.com



*Those who tell
the stories rule
society
Plato*



Module 13

Creating a Mental Picture Through
Metaphor

Metaphor Creates Mental Picture



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We use metaphors daily but most of them are so common-place we don't notice them; many are cliché

- **A picture is worth a thousand words, but a mental picture is worth a thousand pictures**
- **Say the word “circus” and experience it as a proof of this statement – it is loaded with images and feelings**
- **We remember:**
 - 20% of what we hear
 - 80% of what we hear and see
 - 95% of whatever we hear or see when the images are vivid and tap into emotional memories



Information + Metaphor = “I **see** what you mean!”

Anne Miller, *Metaphorically Selling*

Types of Metaphors



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There are technical names for different metaphors that are not that important for practical purposes; what's important is how different metaphors work

- **Direct substitution** – *Our Capture Manager is the 'Gary Kasparov' of strategy*
- **Substitution using “like” or “as”** – *Cyber terrorism **is like toxic fungus or mold on steroids** – if we don't get protection and proactive measures in place to combat it, it will quickly destroy our house and undermine our health. This is why we have a two-prong approach to combating cyber terrorism – not only the security measures to defend us, but the proactive counter-terrorism group to run an offensive before an attack erupts.*
- **Multi-level comparison –analogy that hints at multiple parallels:**
 - *Shooting an Elephant*, an essay by George Orwell, uses the experience of hunting an aggressive elephant in Burma as a metaphor for British Imperialism. Starting each phrase with "some" creates a parallel structure that reinforces how easy it is for observers of the same event to have entirely different opinions.
 - "Some of the people said that the elephant had gone in one direction, some said that he had gone in another, some professed not even to have heard of any elephant."



How to Build a Metaphor



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Book recommendation: Anne Miller's "Metaphorically Selling"

■ Anne Miller's Four Steps:

1. Determine your customer's potential blind spot

Identify some area where they could potentially underestimate or trivialize your understanding or approach, or not want to pay for something extra that's much needed

2. Snapshot the customer

Which analogy would work well for them: sports, famous personalities, cars, kids, current events, etc.

3. Create Comparison

What analogy could you use from the snapshot to eliminate the blind spot?

4. Relate Back to Situation

Make sure you complete your metaphor with explicit explanation of why your analogy works to describe the situation – make it obvious to ensure your analogy is understood correctly



Some Important Metaphor Rules



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Practice your “metaphor muscle” on a regular basis to develop it for proposal purposes

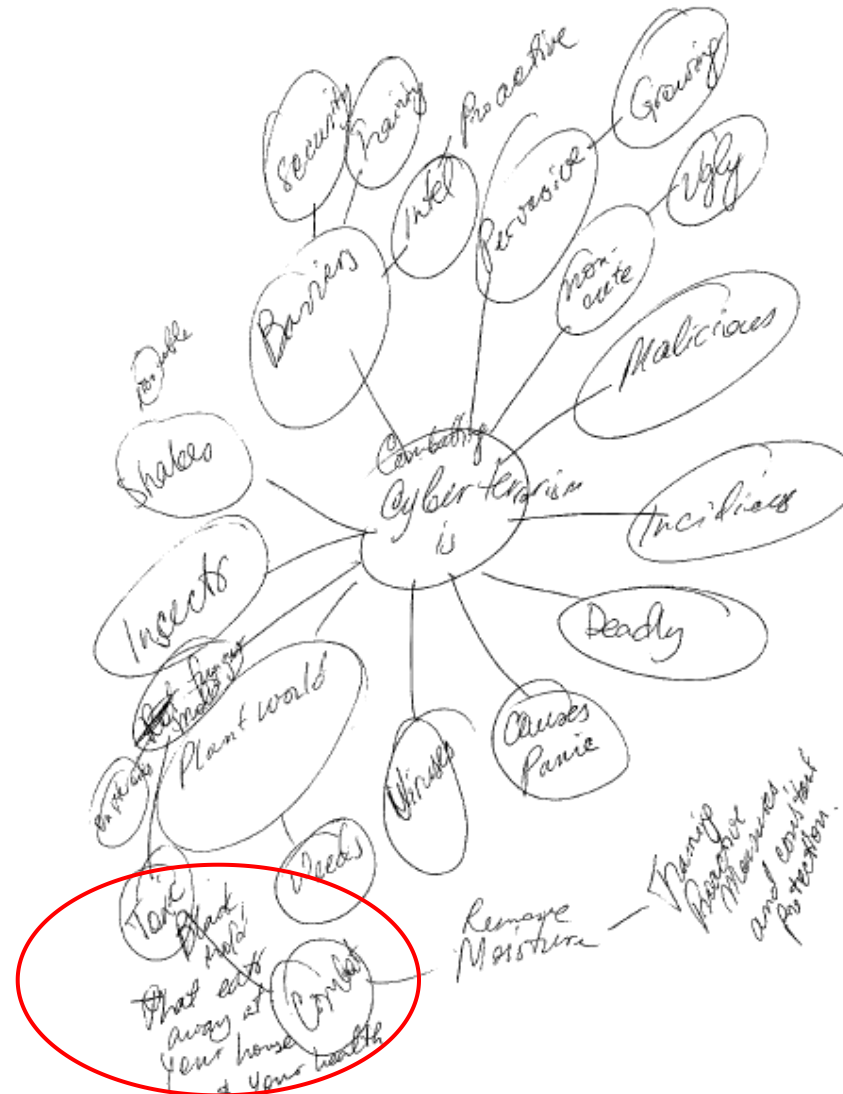
- Relate objects to objects, verbs to verbs, events to events, etc. – mixing objects with actions is confusing
- Make sure that the reference is not obscure or you are certain the person you address knows what you are talking about
 - For example, not everyone knows Gary Kasparov
- Ensure your reference is not offensive or vulgar



Example of Mind Map to Build the Cyber Terrorism Metaphor



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Module 13 Exercise: Create Your Own Metaphor



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It may seem like a tough exercise but try to have fun with it

- Determine – what would your “customer” under-appreciate in your section?
- Pick a “customer”; you will snapshot the “customer” by using a hobby picked for the mind mapping exercise in Module 7
Tip: You may pick the “customer” based on the hobby that’s easier to use for a metaphor
- Create a comparison (metaphor) using a mind map
- Relate it back to the situation – why does this metaphor work?
- Write out the metaphor



Module 14

Stage 3 of the Proposal Writing Process:
Rewriting, Restructuring, Editing, and
Polishing

Stage 3 of the Correct Writing Process: Rewriting, Restructuring, Editing, Polishing



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We are finally up to Stage 3 of the writing process – you are now getting ready to improve and polish your section

- Huge relief to the left-brainers
- Hardest type of editing: rewriting, restructuring, and adding compliance-related topics and language
- Other editing can be automated: sentences, tenses, grammar, spelling
- Can edit in any order
- If editing your own section, walk away from it for a period of time (the longer you can afford, the better)

within budget, and with reduced risk. Experience in secure convoy transportation throughout Afghanistan means our ability to derive lessons learned and best practices. Experience in U.S. Mail transportation in Afghanistan. 1. No one can tamper with the [James will provide the name of the seal] Seal. 2. Understanding the requirements that are needed for mail transportation (personnel, trucks). 3. Effective interactions and partnering with the U.S. Army customer such as coordinated movement of cargo, route planning, intelligence sharing, open discussions on "pain points", recommendations for more efficient and cost effective operations

–[brainstorm on more peculiarities and specificities]

3. Highly Experienced Personnel. We know how to hire, screen and vet trusted Afghan national, TCN and Expat workforce. ~~Our team is lead~~~~O by our~~ Program Manager, Jim Smith will lead the team. He, who brings 22 years of international protection detail leadership experience, including TWISS I and II and Program-XXX and XXXUSACE CMC Program. projects [ask Arsen]. Our Deputy Program Manager, Kazem Arduz, has specific experience working in Bagram APO and serving as a transport manager for Kabul Mail Transport for a U.S. Army contract. Our PMO Director, Arthur Knowles, has successfully managed the Kabul Mail Transport contract and NATO fuel delivery throughout Afghanistan. We also have on our project team additional 6 U.S. citizen personnel with XX-five (5) average years [Get exact numbers and wording from Robert] of experience in convoy security, all are former US military officers and NCO's, two a former 18D's and are currently licensed as Paramedics in all previous U.S. military. They are also trained medics able to provide first aid and stabilize the wounded in case of an attack. We also have a pool of more than 500 vetted drivers who have worked and been

Where Stage 3 Fits in the Proposal Process

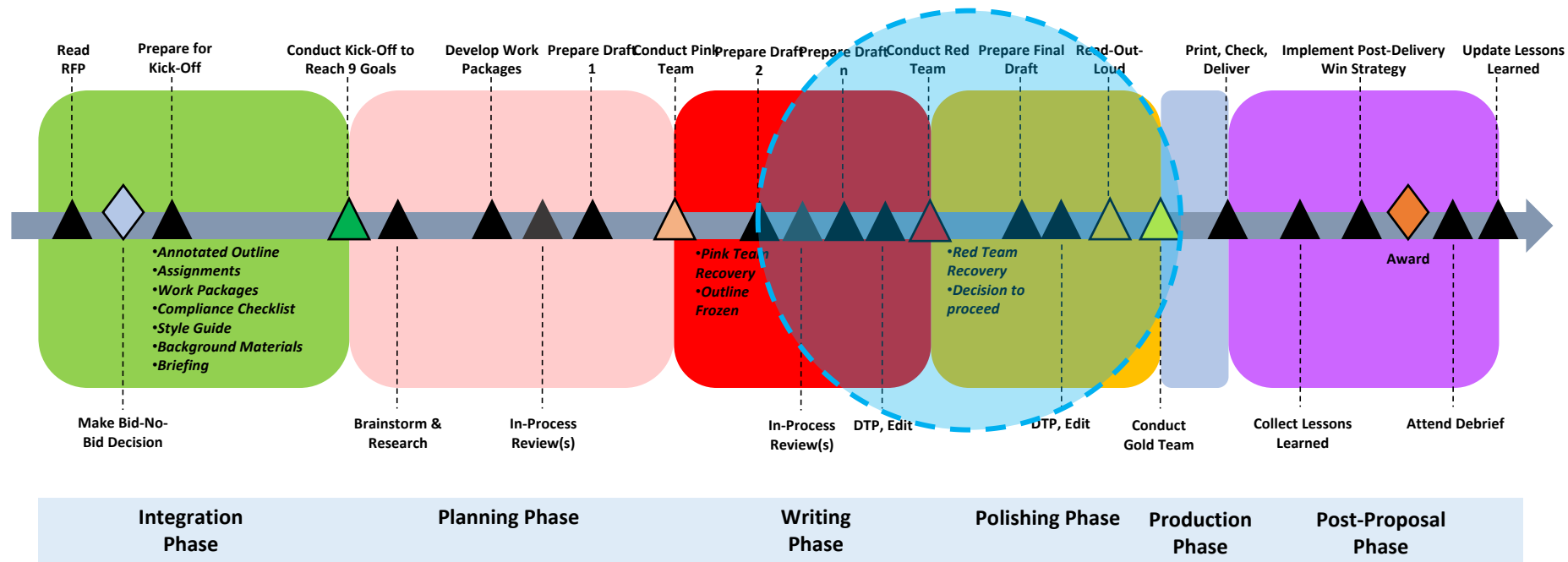


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Stage 3 starts with the second draft, and ends when making the final tweaks to formatting while printing the final version

Predecessor: Capture Process



Successor: Project Delivery Process that Includes Capture of Additional Scope and Projects

Language That Kills Persuasion



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Unfortunately, all of these “killers” are common in proposals

■ Most adjectives and adverbs (superlatives)

- “Premier”
- “World class”
- “Seasoned”
- “Experienced”
- Best of breed or class
- Industry leader, leading provider
- Leading or cutting edge
- State-of-the-art
- Adjectives and adverbs make your proposal “salesy”, insincere, and suspect; the effect is just the opposite of engendering trust
- They are overused and not believable

■ “We will leverage our experience...”

- Explain exactly what you will do and how the past experience will be useful – don’t leave it as an empty claim like most proposals do or it will come across salesy

■ “We understand...”

- Most proposals state that you understand something, and move on to the next topic – creating an unsubstantiated claim
- If the understanding is demonstrated, you don’t need to say “we understand”



More Words to Avoid Using in a Proposal



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- Rounding off or approximating quantities
 - Approximately \$1 million in savings
- Impersonal language
- Too much technical jargon
- Generalizations and statements not backed by facts and details
 - A number of, some, Multiple, Many, Several, Numerous, myriad, etc.
- Philosophical ruminations
 - Our philosophy is to recognize every employee for their achievements...
 - We value...
 - Our mission is to...
 - We are dedicated to...
 - We believe, feel, think
 - It goes without saying that...

Persuasion is
authenticity, authority,
and passion that come
from stating *how your*
expertise will benefit the
customer and *citing the*
facts to prove it

Statements That Sound Fake



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- Industry best practices, industry standard (unless there really is one that you are citing)
- We are customer-focused (who isn't?)
- We are quality-focused (good for us)
- Top-quality (is there any other kind?)
- We are committed to... (means nothing)
- Full-service (are we a gas station in New Jersey?)
- “Uniquely qualified” or “unique” (most aren't)
- “The right choice” (let the customer decide that)
- “Trustworthy” or “You can trust our company to...”
- Comprehensive support (is it really?)



Tentative Language



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You have to be assertive and clear in your proposals to be persuasive; no one cares about your intentions – customers care about results

- We will prioritize...
- Our goal is to...
- We intend to...
- We will attempt to...
- We will strive to...
- We will try to...
- We can provide...
- We are devoted to...
- We hope to achieve...
- Our guess is...



More “Proposalese” and Outright Bad Language to Avoid



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- We are (or will be) pleased (or delighted, or honored, or excited) to...
- “Very”
- “We propose”
- We are the fastest growing company...
- We put our customers first
- “Utilize” and its derivatives (the verb should be “use” unless it’s a technical term)



Passive Voice



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Your proposals should contain as little of the passive voice as possible – even in introducing graphics and tables.

- Most (though not all) verbs have a property known as “voice,” which can be either active or passive
- Voice shows the relation between the subject and the action expressed by the verb
- In the active voice, the subject performs the action
- In the passive voice, the subject is acted upon
- Appropriate only when it is important to point out that the subject is not a “doer” but a “done-to”

The Transition Plan will be developed by our Transition Manager.

Much more assertive and shorter:

Our Transition Manager will develop the Transition Plan.

Editing Checklist



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This checklist subdivides Stage 3 objectives into distinct tasks with their own goals

1. **Content** (compliance, accuracy, consistency, missing information, redundancy, win themes, and uncommon acronyms)
2. **Length and Structure** (proper paragraph order, flow, and paragraph and section length)
3. **Sentences and Words** (passive and active voice, word use, tone, style, and a variety of other issues)
4. **Mechanics** (spelling, typos, punctuation, capitalization, use of pronouns, subject-verb agreement, and verb tense throughout the document)



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OST EDITING CHECKLIST

How to Self-Edit Prior to Turning Sections to Editors

After completing your section, go through this checklist and edit your section before it goes to the editor, as follows:

1. CONTENT:

- ☐ Check your draft against the annotated outline – are there any sections missing? If so, put a placeholder to add these sections, or write them.
- ☐ Search the section for compliance with the RFP: did you use the key words from the RFP requirement, and customer's terminology? Did you address every single element of the requirement paragraph?
- ☐ Are all your facts and elements of the approach accurate? This is your chance to double-check.
- ☐ Is your section consistent with the overall approach and other parts of the proposal? For example – are you quoting the same number of employees as other authors? Are the titles and names of those responsible for doing the work correct? It is time that you check with the rest of the team.
- ☐ Is there information that is still missing? Take action to add it in.
- ☐ Review other authors' sections and check your section for redundancy. Call it to the proposal manager's attention.
- ☐ Make sure that you have included the win themes with benefits and proof.
- ☐ Spell out all the acronyms the first time you use them in the section.

2. LENGTH and STRUCTURE:

- ☐ Check the section length – are you within the page limit? If you are over the page limit, cut what you can without sacrificing the quality of the content. If you are within 10% of the required section length, do not worry about shortening any further – simple editing may cut the length naturally.
- ☐ Move paragraphs and sentences in the paragraphs around for better section flow. Usually, the section has to flow in the following order:
 - WHY (customer problem, challenge, or key risk factor behind the requirement)
 - WHAT (what is it that we propose to do to respond to the requirement)
 - WHO (who exactly is going to do this part of work, by name and title)
 - HOW (step-by-step approach with benefits to the customer, and risk mitigation)

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Module 14 Exercise: Applying Checklist Parts 1 and 2 to Your Draft

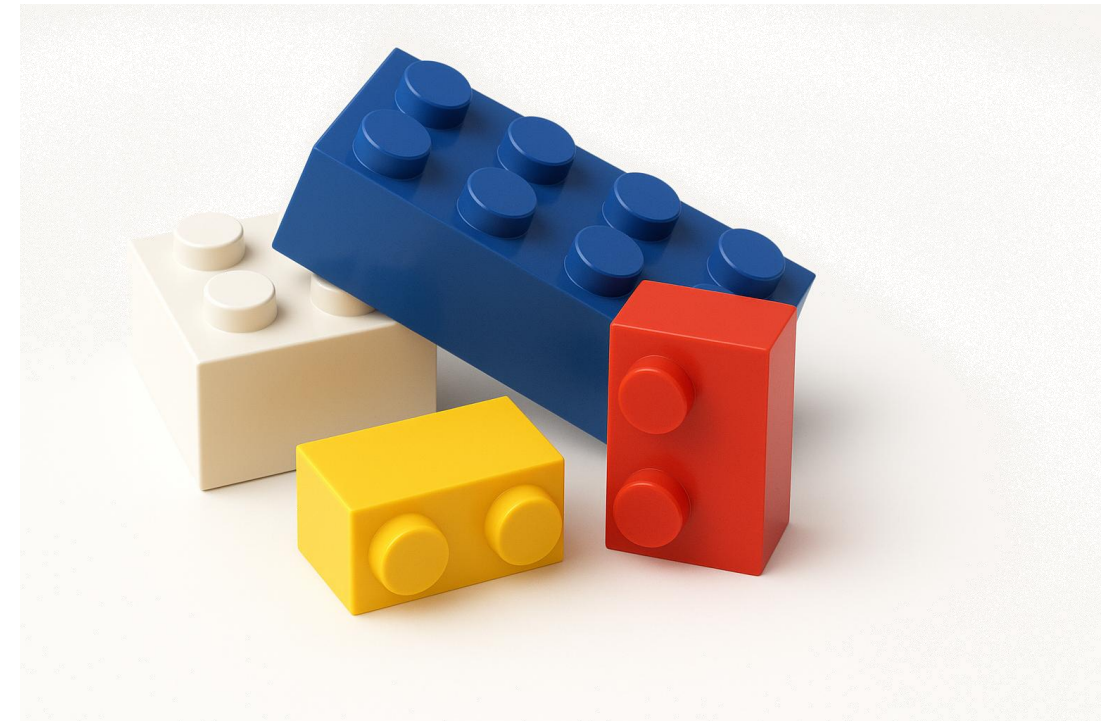


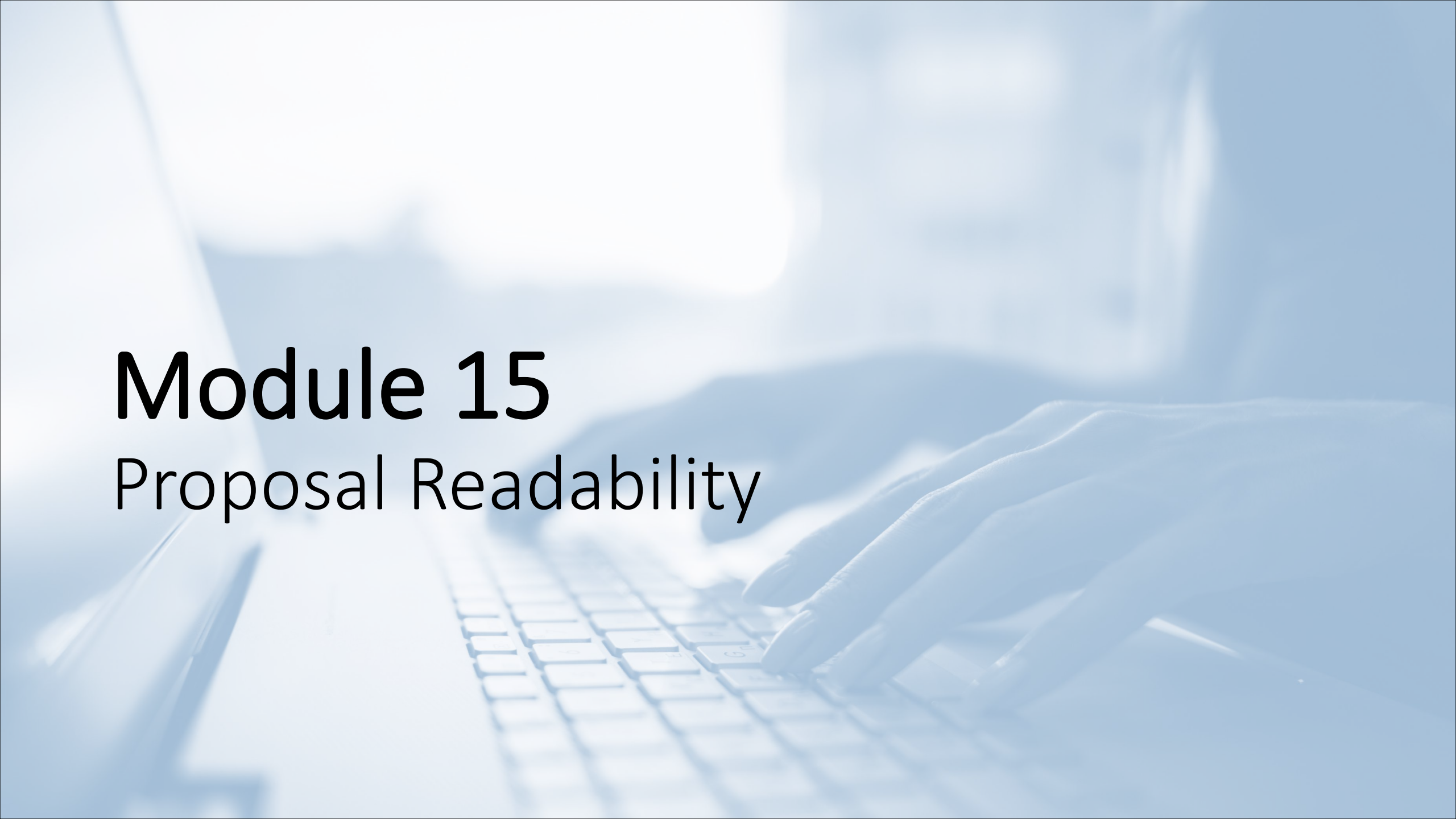
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Some parts of the checklist may warrant a quick glance to confirm everything is right, and others are there to remind you to perform a task

- Tweak the content, length, and structure of your section
- Apply parts 1 and 2 of the editing checklist to your section
- Send your draft to service@ostglobalsolutions.com when done





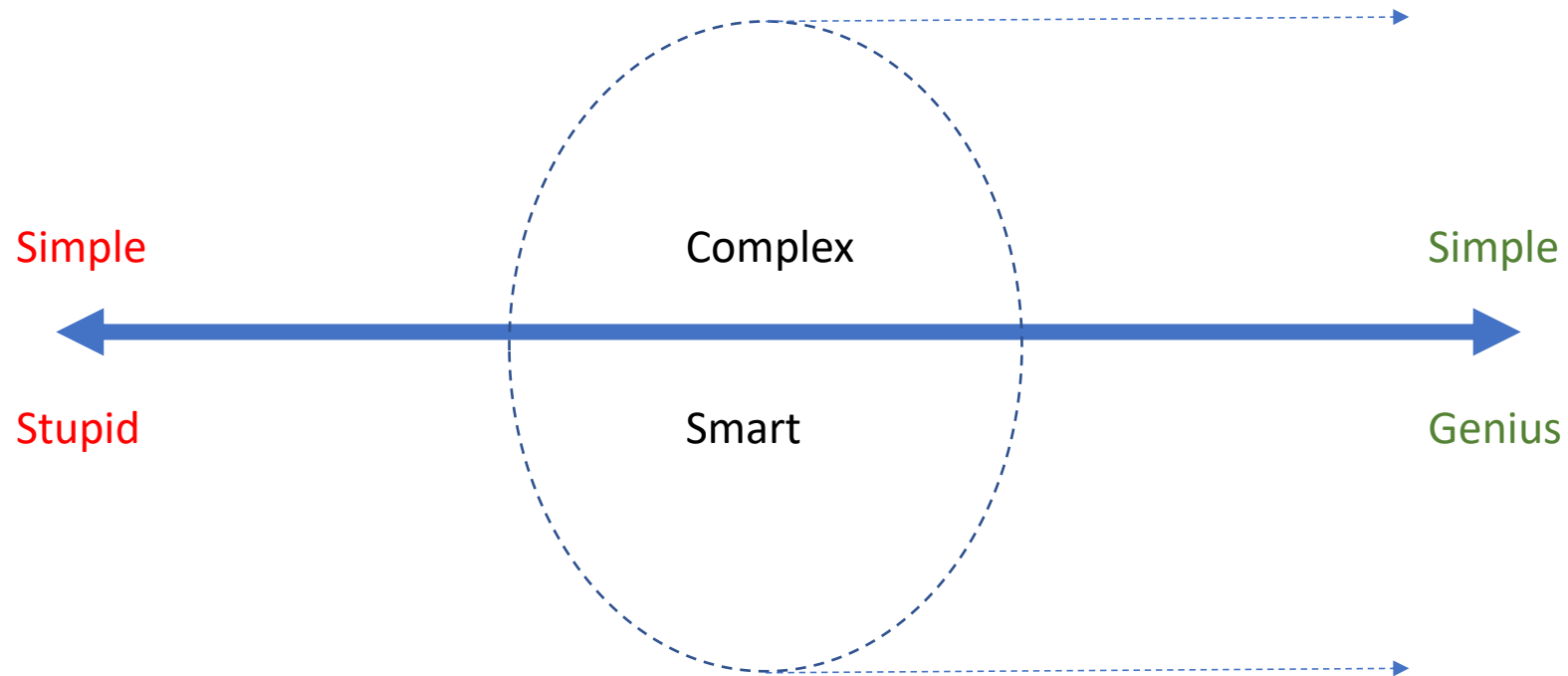
Module 15

Proposal Readability

Simplify Your Writing



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Readability

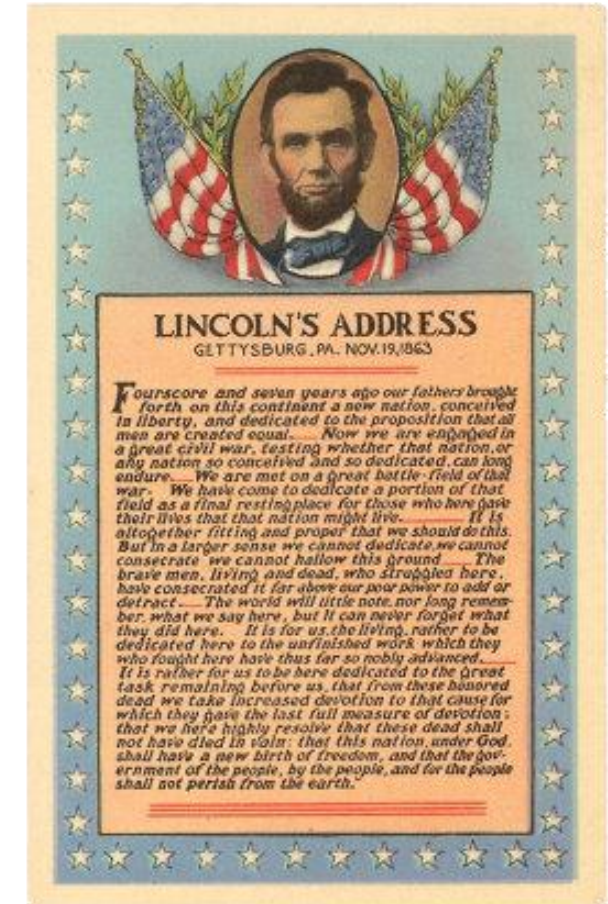


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Remember: One of the most eloquent speeches ever written, the Gettysburg address, is at a 6th grade readability level

- Proposal should be readable at:
 - 9th–10th grade level for management
 - 11th–12th grade level for technical
- What this means is:
 - Average 4-5 sentences per paragraph
 - Average 20 words per sentence
 - **Passive voice below 20%**
 - Flesch Reading Ease score 40-50 or higher
- **Tools:** Microsoft Word and Online Utility



Use the Online Utility



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http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp

The screenshot shows the "Readability Calculator" page on Online-Utility.org. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Online Utility", "English Language", "Text", "Math", and "Other" dropdown menus. Below this, the page title is "Tests Document Readability" and "Readability Calculator". There's a "Like 554" button and a "Post" button. The main text describes the tool: "This free online software tool calculates readability : Coleman Liau index, Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, ARI (Automated Readability Index), SMOG. The measure of readability used here is the indication of number of years of education that a person needs to be able to understand the text easily on the first reading. Comprehension tests and skills training. This tool is made primarily for English texts but might work also for some other languages. In general, these tests penalize writers for polysyllabic words and long, complex sentences. Your writing will score better when you: use simpler diction, write short sentences. It also displays complicated sentences (with many words and syllables) with suggestions for what you might do to improve its readability. Basic text statistics are also displayed, including number of characters, words, sentences, and average number of characters per word, syllables per word, and words per sentence." Below this is a large text input area with the prompt "Enter text (copy and paste is fine) here:". At the bottom, there's a checkbox labeled "or read it from a website (only plain text .TXT) :".

This readability calculator
uses multiple algorithms
for more accurate results

Eliminate Wordiness



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With some training, it will be easy for you to spot wordy phrases; in the meantime, use AI to search for these elements and correct the sentences

- **All forms of “To Be”:** It is, there are/is
 - *It is necessary that we receive clearance in time -> We must receive clearance in time*
 - *There are two alternatives evaluated in the whitepaper -> The white paper evaluates two alternatives*
- **-ION, -MENT, -IZE: Verbs disguised as nouns**
 - *We make the decision**ion** -> we decide*
 - *We recommend the advance develop**ment** of the plan -> we recommend developing the plan in advance*
 - *We arrived at the conclusion**ion** -> we concluded*
 - *We came to an agreement**ment** -> we agreed*



Make Your Writing Leaner (or Write Leaner)...



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Some words may not matter as much, and others may be a bad habit you can shed like old clothes

- **Lists:** *methodology and approach* can be just *approach*
- **Bloated, pompous words:** *herewith, therein, utilize*
- **General verbs:**
 - *Offer*
 - *Provide*
 - *Deliver*
 - *Have*
 - *Give*
 - *Hold*
 - *Get*
 - *Make* plus a noun to make it more specific

The team will hold meetings daily to provide integration support -> "The team will meet daily to support integration"

Two (2) examples provided herein...



Avoid pompous pseudo-legalese

Other Enemies of Clear Writing

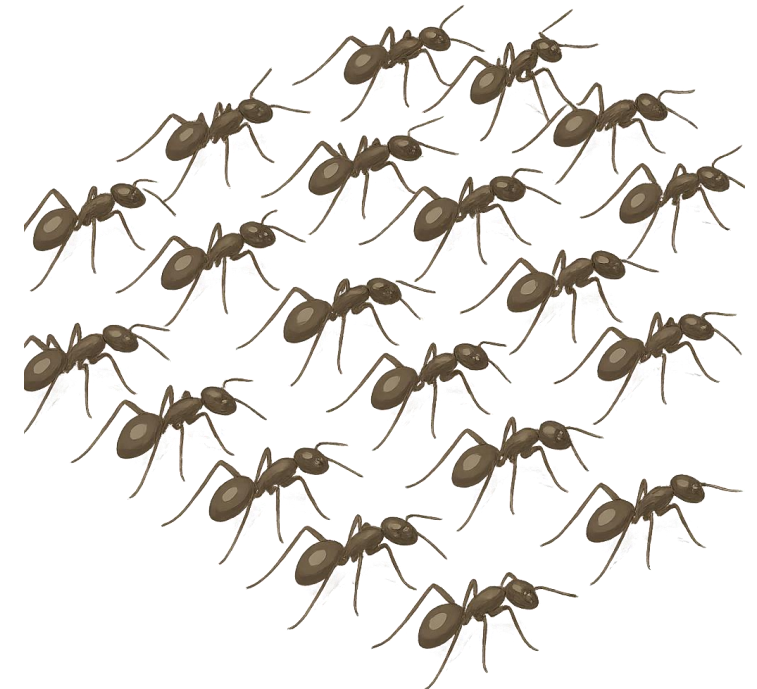


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Wordy writing causes “ants on the page” syndrome – the evaluator can see the words but can’t focus enough to take in what they mean

- **That and which** – drop them: *a solution which is reliable -> a reliable solution*
- **Sentence bloaters:**
 - *In order to or for the purpose of or as a means of -> to*
 - *In the near future -> soon*
 - *In the event that -> if*
- **Stacks of nouns:** *our rapid design development methodology -> our methodology of rapid design development*
- **Death by acronyms** – spell them out an extra time if needed
- **Random bullets** – keep them parallel: all verbs, nouns, gerunds; balance the bullet structure and content



Shorten the Stacked Word Structures



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- A two-year period -> 2 years
- Advance warning -> warning
- Any and all -> any, all, or every
- Capable of -> can, able to
- Deteriorate in quality -> deteriorate
- Close proximity -> proximity
- End result -> result
- Roughly estimated at -> estimated at
- Exactly the same -> the same
- Actual experience -> experience
- Along the lines of -> similar to, like



Use Shorter Words



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Longer words are OK once in a while, but used consistently, they make reading harder

- Accomplish -> carry out, do
- Accordingly -> so
- Accurate, appropriate -> correct, right, exact, precise
- Actual -> real
- Approximately -> about, nearly, almost
- Assist -> help
- At the present time -> now
- By means of -> by, with
- Capability -> ability, can
- Close proximity -> near
- Component -> part
- Comprise, constitute -> form, include, make up
- Conclude -> close, stop, end, finish
- Comply with -> follow
- Consolidate -> combine, join, merge
- Demonstrate -> prove, show
- Determine -> decide
- Discontinue -> stop
- Disseminate -> send out, issue
- Select -> choose, pick
- Eliminate -> cut, drop, end, stop
- Employ -> use
- Encounter -> meet
- Establish -> set up, prove, show
- Evaluate, examine -> test, rate, check
- Expertise -> ability, skill

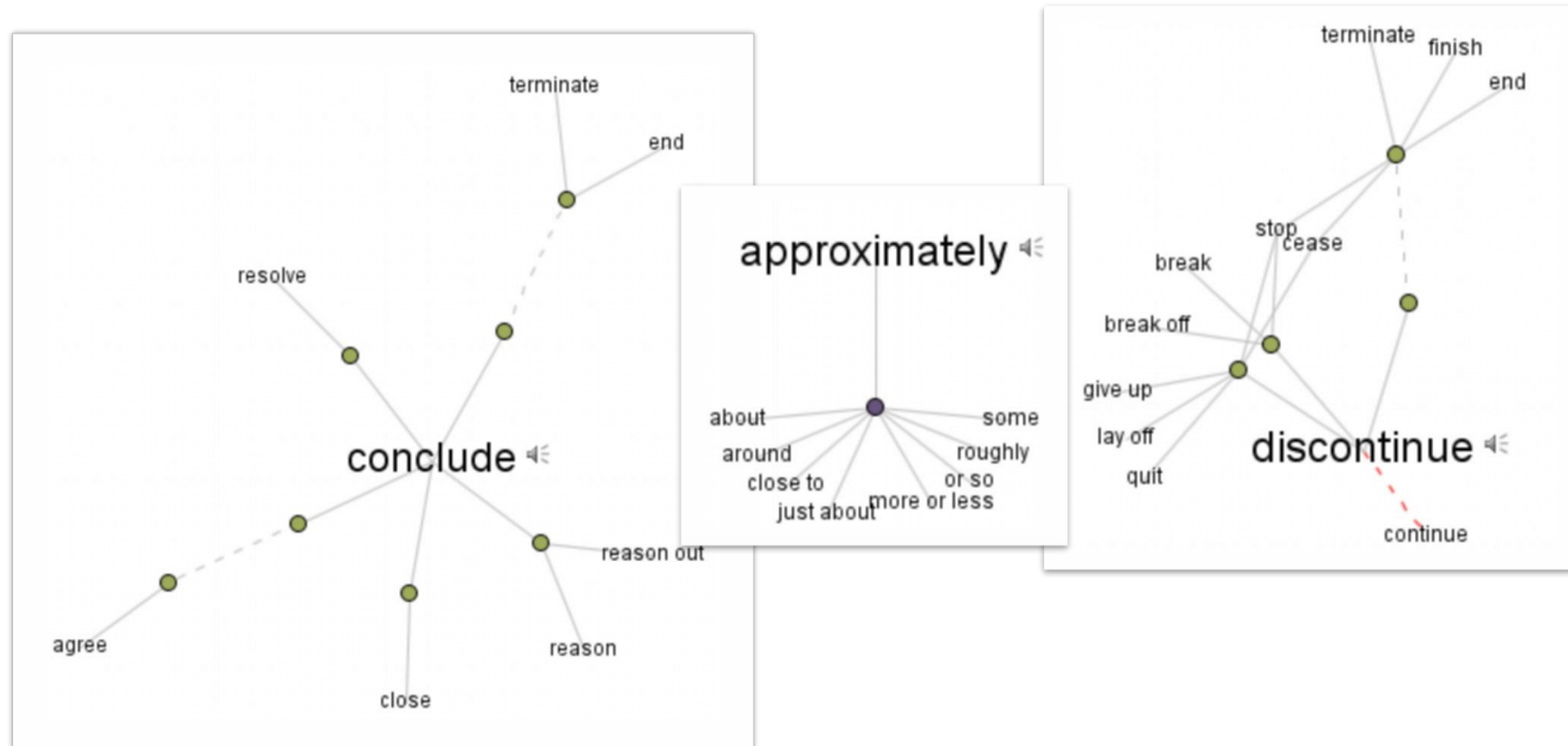
Use Visual Thesaurus to Come Up with Shorter Words



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VisualThesaurus.com



Eliminate Unnecessary Words



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You are done with the sentence when there is absolutely nothing to cut out; please, pay attention to how AI writes as well.

- Actually
- Realistically speaking
- Of course
- Certainly
- Quite
- Rather
- Definitely
- Relatively
- Respectively
- Somewhat
- Specific
- A kind of



Configuring MS Word



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**Go to File, Options,
Proofing**
**To turn on Editor: F7
or Review Tab, Editor**



Editor

Editor Score **72%**

Formal writing

Corrections

Spelling	23
Grammar	25

Refinements

Clarity	13
Conciseness	2
Formality	8
Inclusiveness	✓
Punctuation Conventions	2
Resume	5

Word Options

General

Display

Proofing

Save

Language

Accessibility

Advanced

Customize Ribbon

Quick Access Toolbar

Add-ins

Trust Center

Change how Word corrects and formats text as you type: [AutoCorrect Options...](#)

When correcting spelling in Microsoft Office programs

- ☒ Ignore words in UPPERCASE
- ☒ Ignore words that contain numbers
- ☒ Ignore Internet and file addresses
- ☒ Flag repeated words
- ☒ German: Use post-reform rules
- ☐ Enforce accented uppercase in French
- ☐ Suggest from main dictionary only

[Custom Dictionaries...](#)

French modes: [Traditional and new spellings](#)

Spanish modes: [Tuteo verb forms only](#)

☐ Russian: Enforce strict é

When correcting spelling and grammar in Word

- ☒ Check spelling as you type
- ☒ Mark grammar errors as you type
- ☒ Frequently confused words
- ☐ **Show readability statistics**

Choose the checks Editor will perform for Grammar and Refinements

Writing Style: [Grammar & Refinements](#) [Settings...](#)

[Recheck Document](#)

Exceptions for: [AI Training Model and Security Compli...](#)

- ☐ Hide spelling errors in this document only
- ☐ Hide grammar errors in this document only

Readability Statistics

Counts

Words	422
Characters	2,290
Paragraphs	10
Sentences	32

Averages

Sentences per Paragraph	3.2
Words per Sentence	13.1
Characters per Word	5.2

Readability

Flesch Reading Ease	51.1
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	9.4
Passive Sentences	9.3%

OK



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Please, Complete an Assignment
for **Module 15** Prior to Proceeding
to the Next Module

Module 15 Exercise: Applying Checklist Parts 3 & 4 to Your Draft

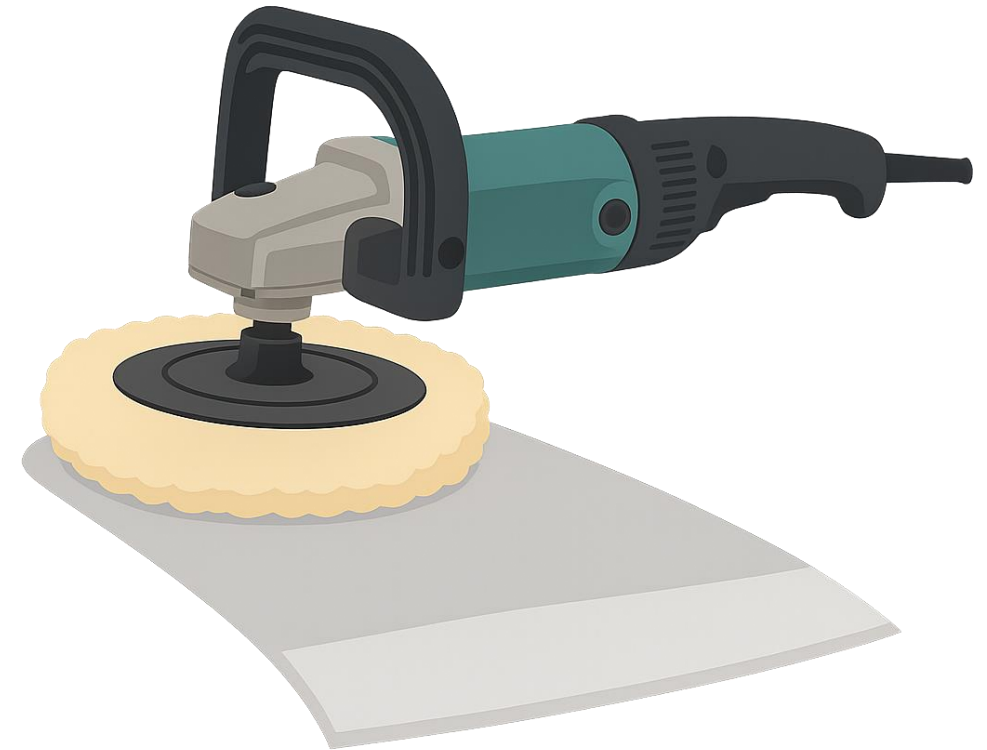


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This is the part where you can rely on tools to speed up your work and polish the section

- Use parts 3 and 4 of your editing checklist
- Configure MS Word or try using the Online Utility
- Run readability statistics
- Make fixes by identifying problem sentences and using the checklist and style guide
- Do not forget to run the CTRL+F search
- Rerun readability statistics and note any changes





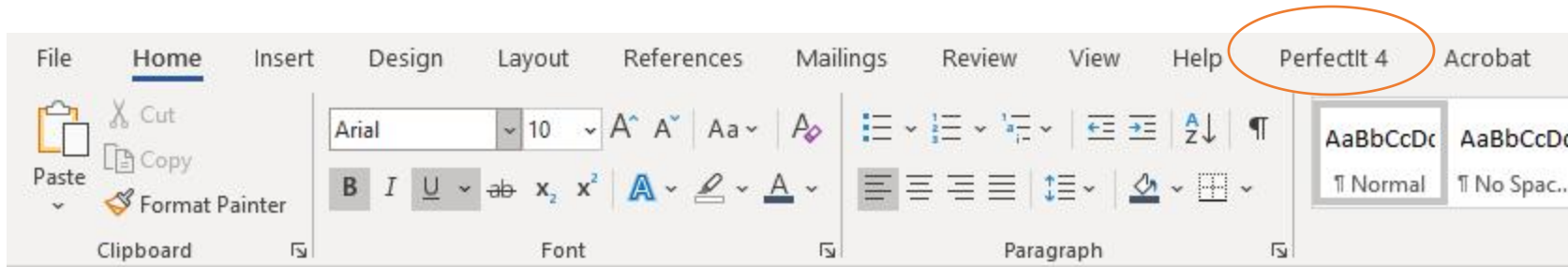
Module 16

Editing Automation and the Big Picture

Other Recommended Tools for Editing Automation and Good Proposal Language



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- PerfectIt (performs consistency checks, creates acronym table)
- WordRake (removes unnecessary words)
- VisibleThread (shreds RFP to help check compliance; checks readability; helps identify unnecessary words)

How It All Maps to the Six-Phase Proposal Process



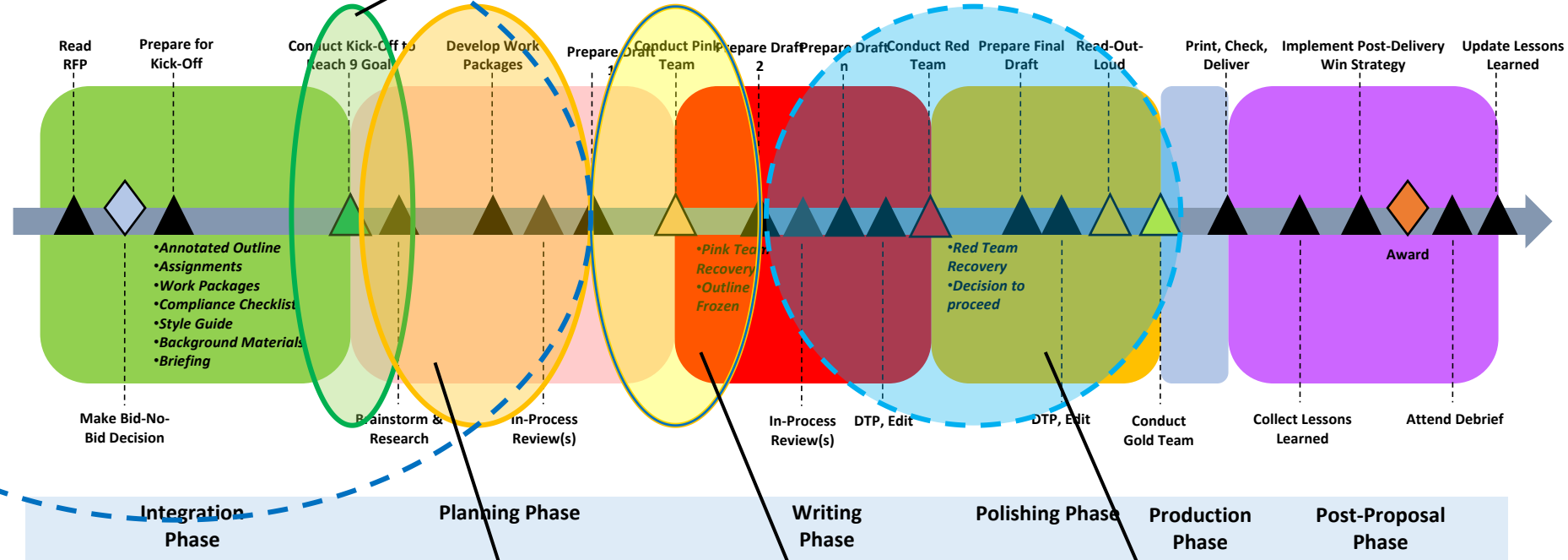
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Predecessor: Capture Process

Addressing the psychology and beliefs about writing

Successor: Project Delivery Process that Includes Capture of Additional Scope and Projects



Stage 1:
Researching,
Brainstorming,
Planning

Stage 2: Writing

Stage 3: Rewriting,
Revising, Editing,
Polishing

Love the Proposal Writing and Get It to Love You Back

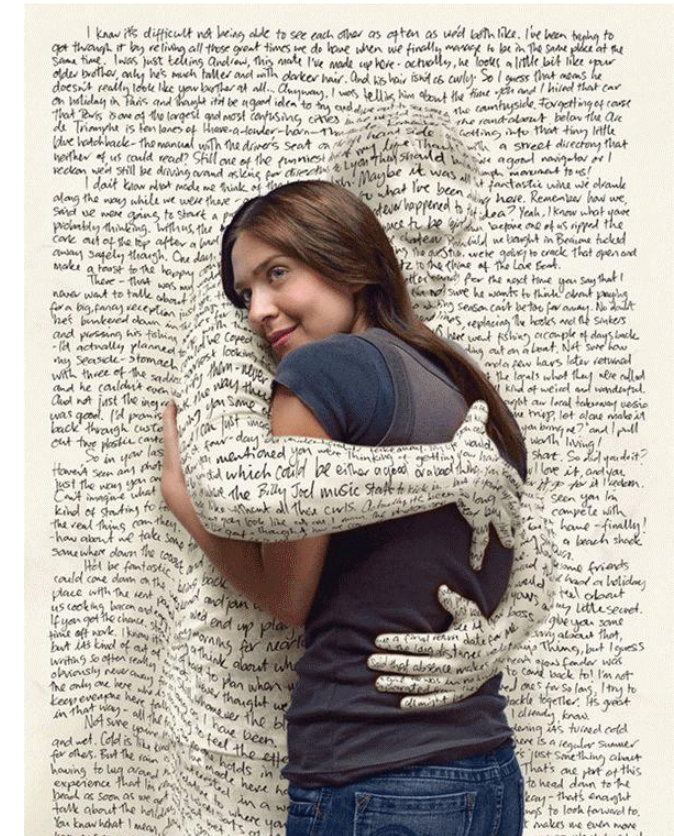


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There are many great tools and techniques to help you write – don't forget to use them

- Yes – it is possible to enjoy proposal writing!
- Hope that you take away many useful techniques from this class
- Remember: most critical thinkers must overcome serious blocks to allow themselves write freely
- No, you don't have to have a special talent to be a great proposal writer
- You CAN make your life easier by teaching your SMEs to:
 - Writer better and faster
 - Beat the writer's block



Recap



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Let's go over today's material

- Can you list at least five attributes of a proposal that make it persuasive so that it sells?
- What genres of stories can you incorporate in a proposal?
- What are the steps for developing a metaphor?
- Which parts of the editing checklist did you find most useful?
- What are the readability metrics you should apply to the technical and management sections?
- What is your biggest takeaway from the class?



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