

How to write a proposal

Writing tricks

How to write a proposal: Do's & Don'ts

Overview

- A lively text...
 - Good catch phrase
 - Main message
 - The structure of a sentence

...well presented...

- Citation
- Examples
- Layout



How to write a proposal: Good catch phrase

- A good catch phrase is the entrance door to your text.
- It's simple, short and induces the reader to continue reading.
- Try a citation, a statement, an example.
- Do not start with numbers!



Good example: „Climate change is one of the most pressing problems of our time and is on the agenda of politicians and scientists alike. “

Bad example: „ This project may give the opportunity to combine high technology of CT and MRI with an adequate level of interventistic radiology within the field of veterinary neurology. “

How to write a proposal: Do's & Don'ts

The structure of a sentence

- A well structured sentence is short.
- It is complete.
- It uses verbs rather than nouns.
- It is in plain English language instead of complicated foreign and technical terms.
- It is factual.



Good example: „Universities restructure their studies. This process is called the Bologna process. It has the goal to standardize the studies all over Europe.“

Bad example: „Universities nowadays are obliged to perform a restructuration corresponding to the complicated process known as Bologna-Process which has the goal to create a european-wide standardization of the standards of studies.“

How to write a proposal: Main message

- Should be placed at the very, very beginning!
- The more important the message, the more to the top of the text it should be, in decreasing order of importance
- Should be easy to understand
- Ask yourself / the author: Explain to me in one short sentence what the goal of your research is. Phrase it as simply as possible.

Good example: „The main aim of the proposed research is to reconstruct winter-spring temperatures from lakes in the Swiss Alps and the northern Swedish alpine region.“

Bad example: „The goal of the project is the development of a novel stereotactic device allowing both CT- and MRI-guided biopsy for diagnosis of neoplastic and non-neoplastic brain lesions in dogs and cats.“

How to write a proposal: Do's & Don'ts

Quotation

- Scientific writing means: Every bit of information from another source has to be proved.
- The Proof is the quotation.
- Different standards (Miller, 2007, p.73) exist in the different languages.
- Authors have to prove their quotation, but use them only when it makes sense and if, they have to be correct and complete.
- Do not create a text with one quotation after the next, write your own text.

Good example : „*Studies on alpine limnology are increasingly important in the context of present climate change, because of the sensitivity shown by mountain ecosystems to atmospheric forcing (Battarbee et al., 2002; Pla and Catalan, 2005).*“

Bad example: „*In the European literature only one author (Moissonnier) stand out in this field.*“

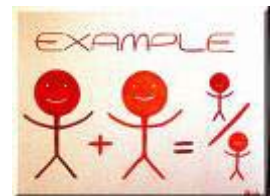
How to write a proposal:

Do's & Don'ts Examples & Graphics

- To illustrate an abstract content, add examples!
- Examples should be easy to understand (from everyday life)

Good example: „Here, future changes in winter temperature and precipitation are likely to have a profound effect on water and energy supplies and winter tourism: The Swiss Alps without snow in winter would be an ecological and economical desert.”

Bad example: ”However, it is mostly the extreme climatic events which have greater environmental, socio-economic and health impacts. In addition, regional- and local-scale temperature variability is expected to have much bigger amplitudes than hemispheric or global means.”



How to write a proposal: Do's & Don'ts Layout

- The layout is the arrangement of the text on the page.
- Use full justification.
- Highlight in bold catch phrases and key words.
- Summarize content with bullet point lists.
- Leave a space between paragraphs.
- Use graphics and pictures. Graphics and figures can tell a lot more than simple text.
- When viewing a page, everyone always first looks at the picture.
- Make sure to give the graphic / picture a heading and explain it in the text. The picture should be large enough and also explain itself in black and white.
- Pictures / graphs should be functional, not merely decorative
- Use headings where appropriate.



A nice layout



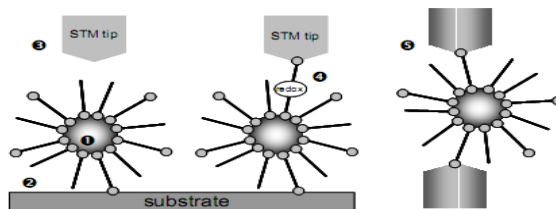
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Research methodology

In order to reach the overarching project objective, an ambitious interdisciplinary approach of state-of-the-art experimental and theoretical efforts is required. The comprehensive understanding and integration of nanocrystal-mediated electron tunnelling will represent a significant advance in the fast-developing field of molecular electronics.

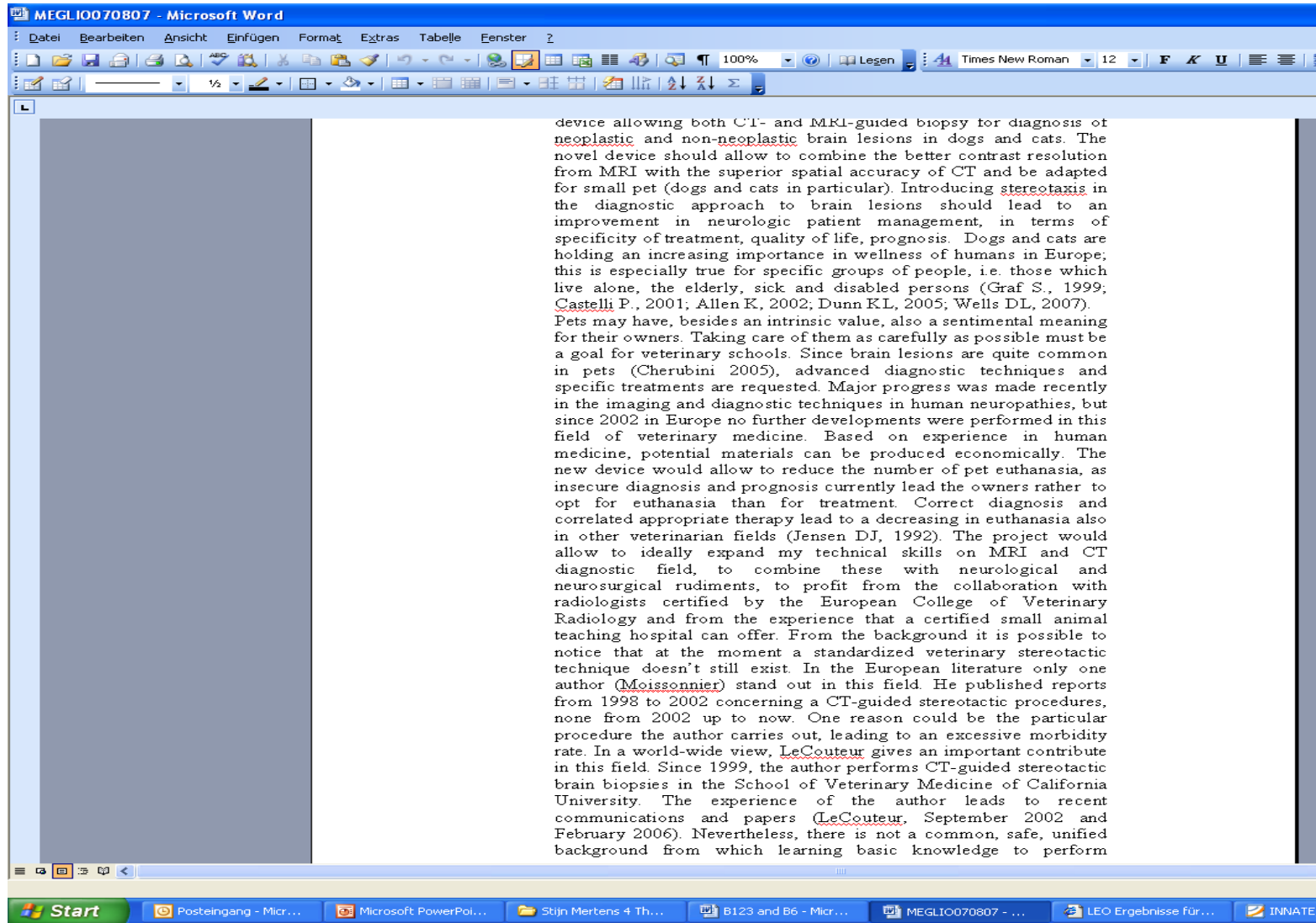
A clear **sequence of steps**, each novel, challenging and essential to the overarching objective, can be identified; numbers ❶ to ❸ refer to the accompanying scheme.



❶ *To synthesise nanocrystals that display active molecular electronic function.* Only in the past few years, nanocrystals with variable size, ligand shell and sufficient monodispersity to allow systematic study have become synthetically accessible. For our project, nanocrystals in the quantum-confinement size range, of various base metals and with variable ligand shells and anchoring groups will be synthesised. Metal cores will initially consist of gold for reasons of chemical stability. At a later stage, this will be extended to Ag and Pd to study the effect of metallic electronic structure on the STS behaviour of the nanoassembly. To cover the accessible cluster size range where quantum confinement effects can be expected, particle diameters will extend from 0.8 to >2 nm (targets: Au₁₁, Au₂₅, Au₇₅, Au₁₄₅, Au₂₂₅). Hybrid systems consisting of a cluster and a redoxactive ligand (*i.e.*, thiolated viologen and ferrocene), to be studied in phase ❷, will be synthesised relying on place-exchange reactions. Samples of suitable starting systems are already available, and consist of nanoparticles with a highly monodisperse Au₁₄₅ core and a ligand shell of either *n*-hexanethiolate (C6S) or a mixed monolayer *n*-hexanethiolate/4-mercaptopyridine (4MP). The latter system was used in the proof-of-principle experiment in Lyngby² and will allow reproducibility tests in the Bern lab. We believe the applicant's previous experience in one of the world's pioneering labs in this field (Prof. David Schiffrin, Liverpool/UK) warrants the ideal background.

❷ *To refine techniques for nanocrystal immobilisation on ultraclean substrates.* Addressing single-nanocrystal electronic function requires near-perfect control over spatial and structural organisation. Single-crystal noble metal surfaces such as Au(111) and Pt(111) are atomically planar and characterised to atomic resolution, and will be the substrates of choice. The host group has extensive expertise in this field. A particular advantage of Au and Pt as substrates is that (nearly) symmetric tunnel junctions can be created through the use of an STM tip of the same material. Limitation of the number density of molecules on the surface is likely necessary and could involve matrix isolation/dilution or be based on intermolecular interactions (*e.g.*, electrostatic repulsion between anion-terminated nanocrystal ligand shells). The collective electrochemical behaviour (in

A not so nice layout



Further do's and don'ts

- No „copy-paste“ generic affirmations but rooted in the specifics of your project

✓ Examples:

- ❖ *Biopolitics is a wonderful thing, and to humankind many joys will bring.*
- ❖ **Astrophysics is a wonderful thing, and to humankind many joys will bring.**
- ❖ **Seismic engineering is a wonderful thing, and to humankind many joys will bring.**
- ❖ **Picking one's nose is a wonderful thing, and to humankind many joys will bring**

Further do's and don'ts

- Don't „say“ that you/your idea are good. Prove it!

Give examples

Use statistics

Quantify

Specify

Don't preach, convince with arguments

- **Explain acronyms and abbreviations/
“Expl. acr. and abbr.”**

**Thank you very much
for your attention!**