Simple concepts for a good proposal

- **The most important things always come first**
  - *Summarize at the beginning of a section rather than at the end*
  - *The first sentence defines each paragraph*

- **Do not be afraid to reframe important concepts**

- **Use bold and underlined headings wisely**

- **Figures and captions are important**
  - Figures give the reader some eye candy
  - Make them tell a story on their own

- **Make it easy to read**
  - *Leave some white space*
  - *Avoid the passive tense if you can*

- **Follow the prescribed format**
  - **Abstract**
    - Briefly summarize the project
    - State your goals
    - Tell why it is an important focus for research
    - For Federal proposals, this is a public page
  - **Specific Aims**
    - Again, tell the reviewer WHY your work is important
    - Be clear and concise with specific aims and your hypothesis
    - Tell a story
    - Tell them why your efforts will make a difference
  - **Background and preliminary data**
    - Be sure to cite others work
    - Be clear about what you have done, how you came to the field, and are qualified
    - Preliminary data for new investigators is different from established scientists
  - **Methods**
  - **This is the place for details**
    - Show that you have a logical plan of attack in regard to your specific aims
    - Acknowledge roadblocks or potential problems - and what you will do should they occur
  - **Proofreading your proposal**
    - Have somebody else read your proposal
    - Take a break, then proof-read your proposal again
    - Please spell check