

HOW TO WRITE A (GOOD) LAY SUMMARY

Many funders ask for a summary of your research for a non-expert audience. Here's a short guide on how to craft a lay summary that grabs the reader's attention and leaves them wanting more.

What's the purpose of a lay summary?

- They demonstrate to reviewers that you can explain your research to non-experts
- Some funders list lay summaries from successful applications on their website, to showcase the research that they're funding.

A lay summary should...

- ✓ Grab the reader
- ✓ Get them excited about your research
- ✓ Make them want to know more

A lay summary is not...

- X A review of others' work
- X The introductory paragraph to the rest of your application

Structuring your lay summary: the hourglass model

Lay summaries should contain a balance of these three topics:



Context

What research has come before? What's the problem/gap/opportunity for innovation?

Your Research

What are you going to do, and how?

Impact

Why does your research matter?
What societal/economic impact could it have?

Tips for writing a lay summary

- 1 Avoid jargon and specialist terms
- 2 Use the active voice, rather than the passive
- 3 Avoid long sentences
- 4 Use a readability checker to check if it's 'lay' enough
- 5 Get feedback from non-experts
- 6 Be prepared to rewrite!