SPECIFIC AIMS OUTLINE
use an outline to get your ideas on paper and then get feedback

Based on The Grant Application Writer’s Workbook by Russell and Morrison

IS THE QUESTION IMPORTANT?

- Opening Sentence – Interest-grabbing sentence that establishes the relevance of your proposal to human health (or the mission of the funding agency)
- Current Knowledge – Succinctly summarize the most important facts to ensure your reviewer have the necessary knowledge to understand your Specific Aims.
  - Fact #1
  - Fact #2
- Gap in the knowledge base – This drives your proposal

WHAT IS THE OVERALL GOAL?

- Long-term goal – ‘Big picture’ of your research must be relevant to NIH’s mission
  - ‘My long-term goal is to…’
- Objective of this proposal – Must fill the gap identified above
  - ‘The overall objective of this application is to…’
- Central Hypothesis – Gives direction – FOCUS – to the research
  - ‘My central hypothesis is that…’
- Evidence in support of your hypothesis
  - Preliminary data
  - Support from the literature
- Rationale – What will become possible after the project is completed
  - ‘The rationale that underlies the proposed research is that…’

WHAT SPECIFICALLY WILL BE DONE?

- Specific Aims – Deliberately broad and open-ended BUT then followed by a focused working hypothesis
  - AIM 1:
    Working hypothesis #1:
    Method
  - AIM 2:
    Working hypothesis #2:
    Method

WHAT IS THE EXPECTED PAYOFF?

- Expected outcomes – What can be expected from your research?
  - Specific expected outcomes for each aims
  - Collective outcome if you attain the overall objective of your proposal
  - Expected advancement of the field
  - Advancement of your career towards an independent scientist (important for NIH Fellowships F31/F32 and K Awards)