Think Like a Reviewer

The typical peer reviewer:

- has a breadth and depth of knowledge, experience, and wisdom and is capable of understanding and judging a large range of work. He or she has a vested interest in ranking the applications in an unbiased, fair, scientifically rigorous way, knowing that the interests of the scientific community are served by giving the best scores to those grants that are most likely to contribute to our body of knowledge.

- may not be extremely familiar with all techniques used in a grant, or may have used the techniques, but does not have experience with the specific biomedical pursuit found in the grants under review. All parts of the grant must therefore be clear and written in such a way that a non-expert can understand them.

- may not know the applicant personally, or feel comfortable with his or her level of independence, knowledge of the field, ability to design experiments with appropriate controls, ability to decide what to do if proposed experiments don't work out, etc. It is the job of the applicant to convince the reviewer.

- may not fully understand the significance of the research area without a clear, compelling argument presented in the application.

- is capable of understanding and interpreting preliminary data if well-presented. These data must therefore be appropriate for support of the proposed science.

- must read several applications in great detail and form an opinion about all of them. The successful application is clear and precise, is easy to read, has a detailed experimental design section, and is free of typographical and other errors.

Read the *Instructions for Applicants* carefully and follow all directions. The reviewers expect to see all applications in the same format. Do not deviate!