

Creating plain English summaries for funding applications

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Why do funders want plain English summaries?

- So they can communicate to non-specialist audiences about the work they fund
- To help fund administrators find the right reviewers for your project
- Because their panels and reviewers may be non-experts

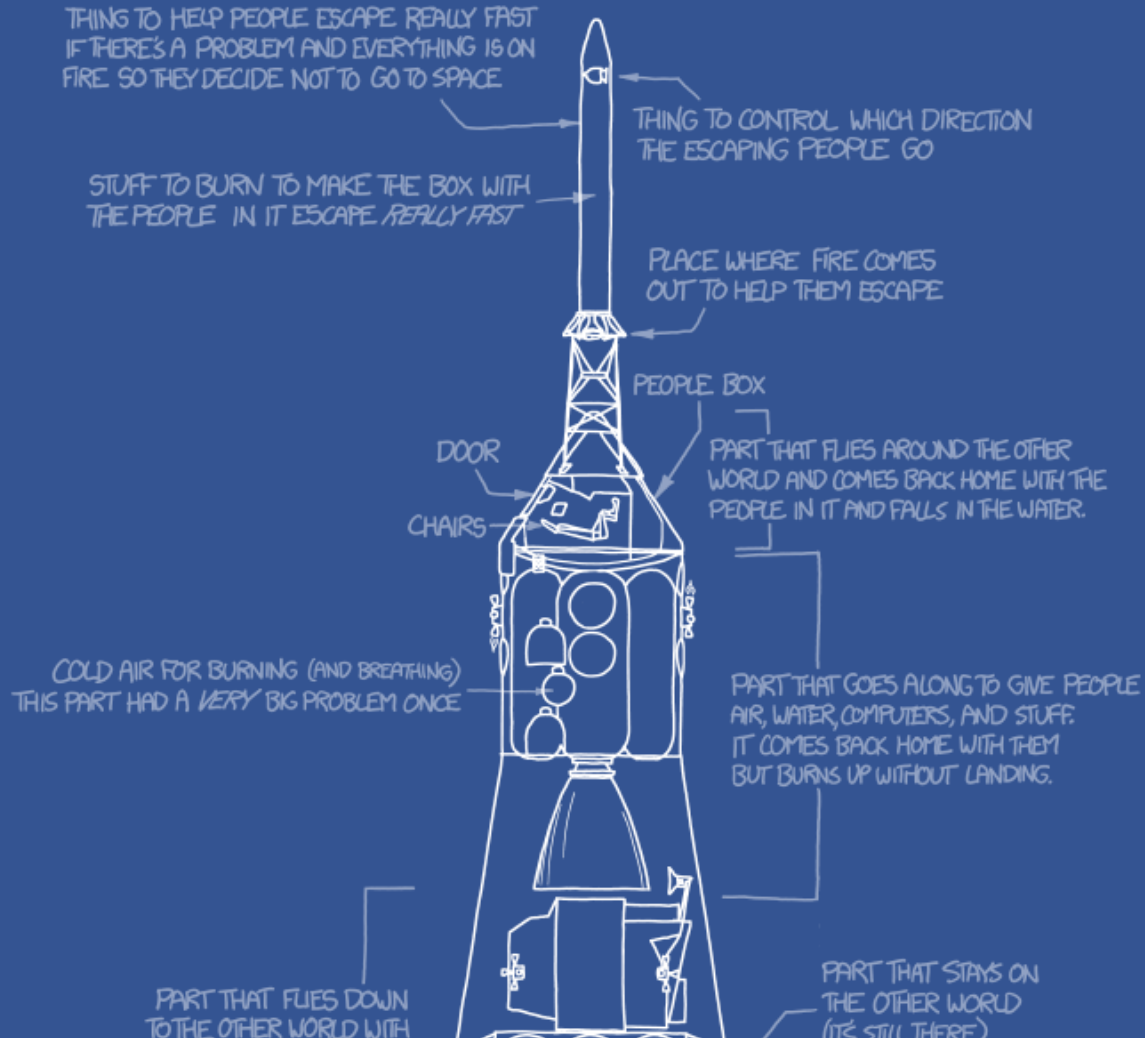
Plain English Summary

Plain English Summary

US SPACE TEAM'S UP GOER FIVE

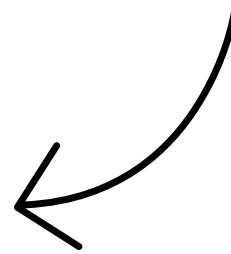
THE ONLY FLYING SPACE CAR THAT'S
TAKEN ANYONE TO ANOTHER WORLD

(EXPLAINED USING ONLY THE TEN HUNDRED
WORDS PEOPLE USE THE MOST OFTEN)



How do we express complicated ideas with simple words?

*The words don't have
to be this simple!*



Lessons from Simple English Wikipedia

Define
technical
terms you
will use
repeatedly

Phases of mitosis [\[change | change source \]](#)

There are five phases of mitosis. Each phase is used to describe what kind of change the cell is going through. The phases are prophase, prometaphase, metaphase, anaphase and telophase.

Prophase [\[change | change source \]](#)

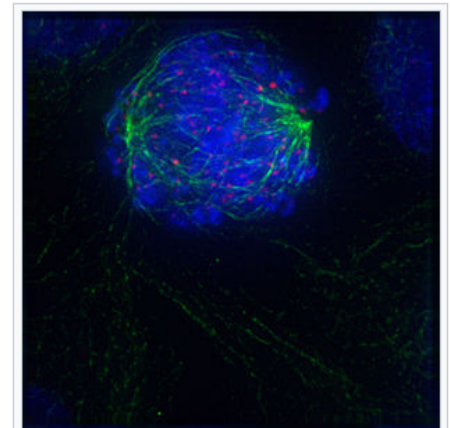
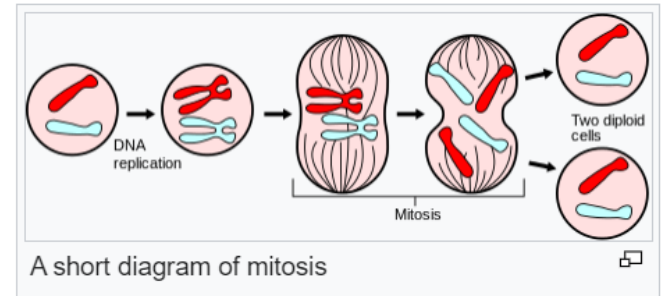
During prophase, chromatin (tangled-up DNA) in the nucleus condense into chromosomes (bunched-up DNA). Pairs of [centrioles](#) move to opposite sides of the nucleus. [Spindle fibers](#) begin to form a bridge between the ends of the cell.

Prometaphase [\[change | change source \]](#)

During prometaphase, the nuclear envelope around the chromosomes breaks down. Now there is no nucleus and the sister chromatids are free. A [protein](#) called a [kinetochore](#) forms at each [centromere](#). Long thin proteins reach across from opposite poles of the cell and attach to each kinetochore.

Metaphase [\[change | change source \]](#)

During metaphase, the pair of chromatids are aligned by the pushing and pulling of the attached kinetochore microtubules, similar to a game of "tug of war". Both sister chromatids stay attached to each other at the centromere. The chromosomes line up on the cell's equator, or center line, and are prepared for division. This is the longest phase of mitosis.



Early prometaphase: The nuclear envelope has gone, the microtubules interact with the kinetochores on the chromosomes

Use easy-to-
understand
imagery

Plain English Summary

Plain English Summary

What should a summary include?

- Everything a reader or reviewer needs to know to understand your plans!
- Not just the introduction or the justification
- Omitting planned methods/research design is a common pitfall
- AI can help (but so can a person)

Plain English Summary

Plain English Summary

- Think about your audience
- Define technical terms and use examples
- Include everything a reader needs to know
- Get a second opinion from someone who doesn't know your project!