

Project proposals: the academic perspective

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The beginning

- Starts with a question
- Why?
- Starting point of any study
- Not enough
- Need a proposal



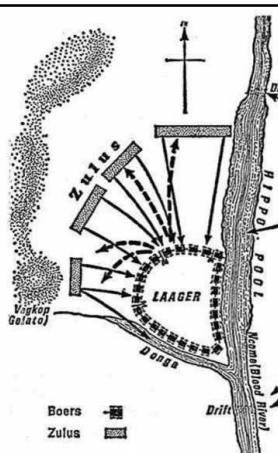
University

- Students
- Don't fully understand
- Before fieldwork
- Enough & correct data



Proposal?

- Battle plan
- Justification of the study
- Reality check
 - Can it be done?
 - Is it affordable?



Important?

- Focus thoughts & understanding
- Why collect specific data
- Understanding
- Adapt when things go wrong



Proposal

- Title
- Aims & Objectives
- Literature Review



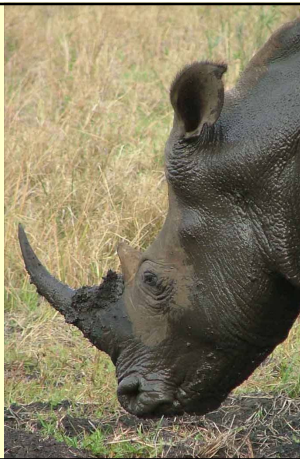
Proposal

- Hypotheses/ predictions
- Methods
- Budget
- Timeline



Aims & Objectives

- Broad aim
 - Defines the overall goal
- Objectives
 - Highlight key aspects that will be addressed



Aims & Objectives

- Broad Aim
 - Determine how food influences the movements of white rhinos
- Objectives
 - Determine how seasonal declines in food quality and availability influence habitat use
 - Determine how grass sward selection influences intake rate & nutritional gain

Literature review

- Sets up the story
- Understand literature
- Three important questions
 - What do we know?
 - Where are the gaps?
 - How is this study going to fill those gaps?



Hypotheses

- Alternative hypotheses
- Alternative theories
- Don't use null hypotheses!!!
- Meaningless



Alternative hypotheses

- Determine how seasonal declines in food quality and availability influence habitat use
 - Declines in dry matter intake (g/min)
 - Declines in nutritional intake (g CP/min)
 - Declines in bite rate (bites/min)

Methods

- How will data be collected?
- Types of data?
- Statistical tests?
- How much data?
- How long will it take to collect?



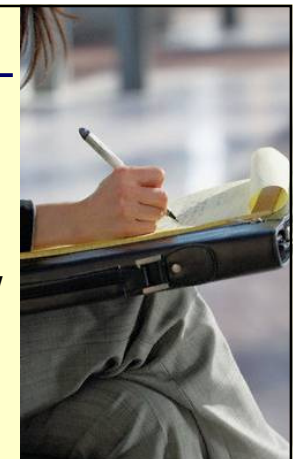
Budget

- Extremely important
- How much is it going to cost?
- Keep to budget
- Funding agencies



Timeline

- Time management
- Different tasks
 - Literature review
 - Data collection
 - Data analysis
 - Write up



Timeline

Month	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Proposal	■							
Literature review	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Setup	■	■						
Trials		■	■	■	■	■		
Analysis			■		■	■	■	
Write up						■	■	■

What now?

- Waste of time?
- No!!
- Developed an understanding
- Basis of thesis, paper or report



Proposal

- Ask good questions
- Set up experiments
- Achieve goals within time and budget

