

REPORT WRITING

Time Management

Allocate time for planning and preparation.

Create a work plan: divide work into specific tasks linked to deadlines.

Be sure to leave time for final proof reading and checking.

Elements of a Formal Report

Three main categories of elements:

1. Front Matter/ Prefatory Parts: gives the report a formal appearance

2. Body/ Report Proper: presents and analyzes information gathered

3. Back Matter/ Appended Parts: anything that a serious reader will want but is not crucial to the problem/issue.

Front Matter

Cover

Title Fly

Title Page

Letter of Authorization (if any)

Letter of Transmittal and Acknowledgement (use formal wording)

Table of Contents (not needed if report is less than 20 pages)

List of Illustrations (if a lot of illustrations)

Glossary (optional)

Executive Summary

Body

Introduction

Text Discussion

Summary

Conclusions

Recommendations

Back Matter

References

Appendices

An Effective Title

1. First, it predicts content.
2. Second, it catches the reader's interest.
3. Third, it reflects the tone or slant of the piece of writing.
4. Fourth, it contains keywords that will make it easy to access by a computer search.

Executive Summary

The single most important part of a business document or report

A miniature report that says as much as possible in the fewest words

Summarises lengthy reports; outlines key ideas, conclusions, and arguments

Designed to be read alone without the accompanying report

General rule of thumb: should be about 5% (or up to 10% in some cases) as long as the primary document

Must be written in the same order as the longer document

Should be written last.

Introduction Checklist

Origin of the report

Problem and purpose/aim/objective

Scope—what is and is not covered

Limitations

Background to your research/Reference to the literature-- what is already known about your question/topic, and if there are any gaps (make a separate chapter if large, usually chapter 2)

Sources and methods of collecting information (make a separate chapter if more than one page, usually chapter 3)

Definitions, abbreviations, and acronyms (if any)

Report preview

Ending of the Report

The ending of the report achieves the report goal.

- ✓ Use a *Summary* if the goal is to review information.
- ✓ Use a *Conclusion* if the goal is to reach an answer.
- ✓ Use a *Recommendation* if the goal is to determine a desirable action.

Ending Summary

Part of report text

Not the same as Executive Summary

A summary of major findings that reviews report highlights only

Contains no new information

Recapitulates minor summaries, if used, at the end of major sections.

Conclusions

Answer to the objective/problem

Follows from the findings and analyses.

Recommendations

Contains action items that would solve or reduce the problem

Often combined with Conclusions if both sections are short.

Example

Conclusions	Recommendations
<i>Home and family responsibilities directly affect job attendance and performance.</i>	<i>Provide managers with training in working with personal and family matters.</i>
<i>Time is the crucial issue to balancing work and family income.</i>	<i>Institute a flexitime policy that allows employees to adapt their work schedule to home responsibilities.</i>
<i>A manager supportive of family and personal concerns is central to a good work environment.</i>	<i>Publish a quarterly employee newsletter devoted to family and child-care issues.</i>

Appendices

Headings: Alphabetical (Appendix A) or numerical (Appendix 1)

Order: the order they appear at the back of report is determined by the order they are mentioned in the report body

Referencing: refer to appendices within the report text (e.g. “See Appendix C for a detailed map of the area”)

Separate Title Page for each Appendix

Remember to list Appendices in Table of Contents page!

Types of Outline—Basis for Table of Contents

Alphanumeric Outline

Decimal Outline

Alphanumeric Outline

Roman numerals—I II III

Capitalized letters—A B C

Arabic numerals—1 2 3

Lowercase letters—a b c

Further subdivision: Arabic numerals inside parentheses (1) (2) (3),
and then lowercase letters inside parentheses (a) (b) (c)

II.

A.

1.

a.

(1)

(2)

(a)

(b)

b.

2.

a.

b.

B.

Decimal Outline

Clearly shows how every level of the outline relates to the larger whole:

1.0

1.1

1.2

1.2.1

1.2.2

2.0

Wording of Outline

1. Topic heading:

- ✓ short constructions
- ✓ frequently consists of one or two words
- ✓ merely identifies the topic of discussion

2. Talking heading (concise, please!):

- ✓ identifies the subject matter covered
- ✓ summarizes the material covered

Equal-level headings to be parallel in structure

Variety needed in headings

Subhead coming immediately after a heading—NO!

Page Numbering

Executive Summary immediately after Table of Contents/Table of Illustrations/Table of Figures, and before Introduction

Pages between Table of Contents and Introduction numbered with lowercase Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v, etc)

Table of Contents, List of Tables, List of Figures are unnumbered

Appendix pages numbered separately from report body and related to numbering of Appendix; e.g. 1-1, 1-2, 1-3 etc. or A-1, A-2, A-3 etc.

Page 1 first page of Introduction

Page numbers centred at bottom of page or bottom right of page

Structural Guideposts

1. Transitions:

- ✓ words or sentences that show relationship of succeeding parts
- ✓ may appear at the beginning of a part, within a part, or at the end of a part

2. Headings:

- ✓ must cover all material under it until next heading
- ✓ may include subheadings where there are two or more divisions within a main heading

3. Internal previews:

- ✓ appear at the beginning of a section after a primary-level heading
- ✓ may be a single sentence or more extensive.

Structural Guideposts (contd.)

4. Internal summaries:

- ✓ appear at the close of a section before a primary-level heading
- ✓ reiterate key points
- ✓ link the section to other sections
- ✓ link the section to the report's specific purpose.

Designing Effective Visuals

Simple, consistent, and clear designs

Either portrait or landscape layout

Each visual to tell a single story or highlight one important relationship

Each visual to be referred to at an appropriate place in the text

Each visual to be placed as close as possible to initial text reference – but always after first text reference

Full-page visual to be placed on page following first reference to information it covers

Text does not need to explain everything in the visual.

Tables and Figures

Every graphic should be identified with the word "Table", "Figure", or other appropriate descriptor and have a title (as a phrase):

- ✓ titles of tables appear above the tabular display
- ✓ titles of other types of graphics appear below it

Headings/titles to be repeated on second and subsequent pages when a table splits over two or more pages

Tables to be split at an appropriate place, e.g. just before a new subheading

Tables and Figures (contd.)

Each item to be numbered consecutively in order of appearance.

Two methods for numbering:

Sequentially throughout the report, e.g.:

1, 2, 3...

Chapter number first, then numbered sequentially within each chapter, e.g.:

Tables in Chapter 1: Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3...

Figures in Chapter 10: Figure 10.1, Figure 10.2, Figure 10.3...

Summary tables and charts

Condenses various pieces of information from various places in the report

Displays them in one location

Reinforces text comparison.

Other Issues

Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols defined the first time they appear; abbreviation in additional uses

One-inch margins on all sides of report pages except left side
Left side 1.5 inch for bindings

Times New Roman 12-point type size

Single-spacing in report body, justified

Each chapter on a new page

Chapter title at the top of the starting page

THANK YOU!
