

Guidelines Reports

Your Goal

Your goal is to provide clear, accurate information and analysis about an incident, a time period, a project, a trip, or another business activity.

“This report,
by its very
length,
defends
itself
against
the risk
of being
read.”

—Winston
Churchill

1. Prewrite: (Ideas and Organization)

- Know your purpose: Is it to supply information only, or to share conclusions as well? What outcome do you want?
- Know your readers: What are their needs? What is their knowledge of the topic and expected use of the report? What will be their likely response? Do different readers have different needs?
- Consider the big picture: Why is the report important? What effects might it have within and beyond your organization?

Prepare to draft.

- Carefully study the topic and gather accurate data.
- Review previous reports or related documents. Consult with colleagues and experts as needed.
- Outline your report using an appropriate method of organization.

2. Draft: (Ideas, Organization, and Voice)

Opening Introduce the topic and provide a context. To be direct, summarize key points; to be indirect, exclude the summary and simply give appropriate background information.

Middle Supply, organize, and explain your findings, including all essential details.

Closing Offer conclusions and, if expected, recommendations.

3. Revise: (Ideas, Organization, Voice, Words, and Sentences)

- Have you supplied the facts objectively?
- Have you used effective transitions and summaries?
- Is your tone businesslike, but not stuffy or impersonal?
- Do you have a natural, condensed style: clear words and smooth sentences.

4. Refine: (Conventions and Design)

- Have you checked grammar, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics?
- Have you checked headings, lists, and numbering?
- Have you checked use of graphics, white space, boldface type, and color?

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Note: Pre
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Closing

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