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## CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

- 1 What kinds of reports do you expect to write in your chosen profession? Why? **LO1**
- 2 Explain the concept of outlining as a process of division. **LO4**
- 3 What formatting devices in a table of contents can aid reader comprehension? Find some examples of helpfully formatted tables of contents and discuss what makes them effective. **LO5**
- 4 You are writing a report on the progress of your local cable company's efforts to increase sales of five of its products through extensive advertising in print and online newspapers and magazines and on television and radio. Discuss the possibilities for major headings. Evaluate each possibility. **LO2, LO4**
- 5 Find a sample short report online on a topic of interest to you and evaluate it using the advice in this chapter. Is it a good report? Why or why not? **LO3, LO6**
- 6 Explain the difference between personal and impersonal writing. Which is "better"? Argue both sides. **LO6**
- 7 Explain the differences between the present-time viewpoint and the past-time viewpoint. **LO6**
- 8 Is it incorrect to have present, past, and future tense in the same report? In the same paragraph? In the same sentence? Explain. **LO6**
- 9 "Transitional sentences are unnecessary. They merely add length to a report and thus run contrary to the goal of conciseness." Discuss. **LO6**
- 10 "Reports are written for business executives who want them. Thus, you don't have to be concerned about holding your reader's interest." Discuss. **LO6**
- 11 "Collaborative reports are better than reports written by an individual because they use many minds rather than one." Discuss. **LO7**
- 12 "Disagreements in groups are counterproductive." Discuss. **LO7**

## SKILLS BUILDING EXERCISES

- 1 For each of the following problem situations, write a clear purpose statement and list the factors you would probably need to investigate. When necessary, you may use your imagination to supply any additional information needed. **LO1, LO2**
  - a. A manufacturer of breakfast cereals wants to attract a new demographic of customers.
  - b. The manufacturer of a toothpaste wants a bigger share of the toothpaste market.
  - c. Wal-Mart wants to give its stockholders a summary of its operations for the past calendar year.
  - d. A building contractor engaged to build a new office for Company X needs to submit a progress report.
  - e. Able Wholesale Company wants to find out how much cash it should have in reserve.
  - f. The supervisor of Department X must prepare a report evaluating the performance of an administrative assistant.
  - g. Baker, Inc., is experiencing higher than normal employee turnover.
  - h. An executive must rank three subordinates on the basis of their suitability for promotion to a particular job.
  - i. The supervisor of production must compare three competing machines that are being considered for use in a particular production job.
  - j. An investment consultant must advise a client on whether to invest in the development of a lake resort.
  - k. A consultant needs to help a restaurant improve its profits.

- 2 Select a hypothetical problem with a time division possibility. What other division possibilities does it have? Compare the two possibilities as the main bases for organizing the report. **LO2**
- 3 Assume that you are writing the results of a survey conducted to determine what kinds of groceries are purchased by female college students in the United States. What division possibilities exist here? Which would you recommend? **LO4**
- 4 For the problem described in the preceding exercise, use your imagination to construct topic headings for the outline. **LO4**
- 5 Point out any error in grammatical parallelism in these headings: **LO4**
  - a. Region I sales lagging.
  - b. Moderate increase seen for Region II.
  - c. Sales in Region III.
- 6 Point out any error in grammatical parallelism in these headings: **LO4**
  - a. High cost of operation.
  - b. Slight improvement in production efficiency.
  - c. Maintenance cost is low.
- 7 Which of the following headings is inconsistent with the others? **LO4**
  - a. Agricultural production continues to increase.
  - b. Slight increase is made by manufacturing.
  - c. Salaries remain high.
  - d. Service industries show no change.
- 8 Select an editorial, feature article, book chapter, or other document that has no headings. Write talking headings for it. **LO4**
- 9 Assume that you are reporting the results of a survey you have conducted. Write a paragraph of the report using the present-time viewpoint; then write the paragraph using the past-time viewpoint. The paragraph needs to convey the following information: **LO6**

Answers to the question about how students view the proposed Aid to Education Bill in this survey and in a survey taken a year earlier (last year's results are in parentheses):

For, 39 percent (21); Against, 17 percent (43).  
No answer, undecided, etc., 44 percent (36).
- 10 List the advantages and disadvantages of each of these different media for writing collaboratively. **LO7**
  - a. Face-to-face meetings
  - b. Email
  - c. Discussion boards
  - d. Online editing tool (e.g., Google Docs)
  - e. Website (e.g., blog or wiki)
  - f. Live online interaction (e.g., Skyping or IM-ing)