

Technical Communication

Report Writing

BELT

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How We Communicate

- CVs, Resumes
- Email, Web site, FAQs
- Letters, Newsletters, Brochures, Articles, Catalogs
- Advertisements, Notice Board, Pamphlets, Signs, Press Release
- Presentations, multimedia, talks
- Reports, Manuals, Proposals, Books

What is a report?

- Reportare- means to bring back.
- Over time it has evolved to mean that the gathered information is unbiased and evidence based.
- A report is usually a piece of factual writing, based on evidence, contains organised information on a particular topic.

Classification of Reports

- Information ,Analytical Reports (Purpose)
 - attempts to trace growth of Co. X
 - Production figures for a particular period.
 - Reasons for lower production.
 - Lab reports and project reports
- Periodic ,Special (Frequency)
 - Progress reports ,inspection reports, annual reports and sales reports.
 - Feasibility of opening a new branch office, fire incidents
- Oral, Written (Mode of Presentation)

Which Reports?

Sales Reports

Inspection Reports

Annual Reports

Audit Reports

Feasibility Reports

Progress Reports

White Papers



SIGNIFICANCE OF REPORT WRITING:

- **1. Reports give consolidated, factual & updated information**

A report provides consolidated, factual and an up-to-date information about a particular matter or subject. Information in the report is well organized and can be used for future planning and decision making.

- **Reports as a means of internal communication**

A report acts as an effective means of communication within the organization. It provides feedback to employees. It is prepared for the information and guidance of others connected with the matter / problem.

- **Reports facilitate decision making and planning**

Report provide reliable data which can be used in the planning and decision making process. It acts as a treasure house of reliable information for long term planning and decision making.

Reports disclose unknown information

Reports provide information, which may not be known previously. The committee members collect data, draw conclusions and provide information which will be new to all concerned parties. Even new business opportunities are visible through unknown information available in the reports.

- **Reports help in solving the problems**

Reports are useful to managers while dealing with problems faced by the company. They provide guidance while dealing with complicated problems.

- **Reports give information to shareholders**

Some company reports are prepared every year for the benefit of shareholders. Annual report for example, is prepared and sent to all shareholders before the AGM. It gives information about the progress of the company.

Difference

Research Paper

- written mainly to disseminate knowledge.
- Incentive may be one's professional growth

Report

- Mainly for Decision making or action
- Arises out of need.

Thesis And Dissertation

- *Dissertation*- It is longer than a research paper and it arises out of the study, research and analysis undertaken by you over a term or a semester.(also known as term paper)
- *Thesis*- It is more detailed and longer than a dissertation. It may span over a period of two to five years. In a few cases it may extend beyond five years also.

5 Steps to Report Writing¹

1. Define/analyse the problem(Think about the objectives)
2. Determine the scope of the report.(to make it precise and relevant, writer has to determine the amount of info required)
3. Consider the audience/reader(age, education,attitudes, professional status of audience)
4. Gather the necessary information through interviews,observations,discussions,reports, books,other printed material.
5. Analyze the information through data analysis tools.
6. Preparing the report(offer solution to problem, give recommendations.)

Elements/ Structure of a technical report

-
- Cover Page
 - Title Page
 - Certificate
 - Acknowledgements
 - Contents
 - List Of Illustrations
 - Abstract
- Prefatory Parts/
Front matter
- Introduction
 - Discussion
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations
- Main Text
- Appendix/Appendices
 - References/Bibliography
 - Glossary
 - Index
- Supplementary Parts/Back matter
- Frontispiece (Cover)
 - Letter of Transmittal (Prefatory)
 - Copyright notice (Prefatory)
 - Preface (Prefatory)
 - Summary (Prefatory)
 - Index(Supplementary)
- Optional Elements

Prefatory Parts

Cover Page

- Elegance and protection
- Serves as quick reference(for topic and author.
- The classification of report(secret/Top secret) done on top left hand corner.
- The report no. mentioned on top right hand corner.
- Frontispiece- Illustrations(photographs, drawings, diagrams) superimposed on the cover page.

Title Page

- First right hand page of the report.
- Name and designation of intended audience.
- Name and designation of approving authority, if any

Certificate

- They vouch for the original contribution of the report writer.

Letter of Transmittal

- Conveys the report to audience.
- Written version of what you would say when handing over the report.

Contents include:

- Objectives/ Terms of reference
- Scope
- Methodology adopted
- Summarize conclusions and recommendations
- Significance/Suggestions
- Additional research necessary
- Thank the reader. Offer to answer questions.

Acknowledgements

- This is a list of persons who you would like to thank for their advice, support and assistance of any kind.
- Categorize according to the audience: courtesy, real help, emotional support, secretarial assistance

Few openings

- Thanks are due to....
- Mere thanks in a few words would be highly....
- I acknowledge with thanks the support rendered by.....

Table of Contents

- You should list all the main sections of the report in sequence with the page numbers they begin on.
- If there are maps, charts, diagrams ,graphs, drawings included in your report, these should be listed separately under a title such as 'List of Illustrations' together with the page numbers on which they appear.
- They are grouped under the heading 'Figures'
- What about tables???

Table of Contents

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
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	List of Figures	vii
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	1.1→ Rationale for this thesis	1
	1.2→ Statement of the problem	11
	1.3→ Objectives	2
	1.4→ Methods	4
	1.5→ Structure of the thesis	6
2	→ Literature Reviews	7
	2.1→ Kinematics of Cable-stayed Bridges	7
	2.2→ Lagrange's formulation	8
	2.3→ Damping models	10
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3	→ Analysis of Response to Harmonic Excitation	15
	3.1→ Model Analysis	23
	3.2→ Solution	28
4	→ Results and Discussion	37
5	→ Conclusion and Recommendations	46

Table of Contents for Malaria Prevention

Contents

Page no

■ Summary.....	2
■ Contents.....	3
■ 1. Introduction.....	4
■ 2. Prevention methods.....	5
■ 2.1 Insecticide treated nets.....	5
■ 2.2 Community based work projects.....	6
■ 2.3 Indoor residual spraying.....	7
■ 3. Success and Cost.....	8
■ 3.1 Proactive and reactive approaches.....	8
■ 3.2 Striking a medium between cost and success.....	9
■ 3.3 Future success.....	9
■ 4. Conclusions.....	9
■ 5. Recommendaions.....	10
■ 6. Appendix.....	10
■ 7. References.....	11

List of illustrations

- Serves as the contents page for all the illustrations.
- Graphs, maps, drawings, charts are grouped under heading Figures.
- Tables can be grouped under different heading.
- Prefatory parts are numbered in small roman numerals while main text and supplementary parts are numbered in Arabic numerals.

Abstract

- The length is generally 2 to 5 percent of the report.
- If the length of report is less than 10 pages it does not require it.
- It is especially relevant in specialist to specialist communication.
- It does not allow abbreviation, acronym or Illustration.

Difference

Abstract

- Essence of the report .
- 2-5 percent of the report.
- More relevant in specialist to specialist communication.
- Do not include illustrations.

Summary

- Entire report in a nutshell.
- 5-10 percent of the report.
- Meant for all readers.
- May include certain illustrations.

Preface(included when published)

- It is the preliminary message from the writer to the reader.
- Contents:
- Factors that led to the report.
- Organisation of the report
- Highlights
- Significance
- Acknowledgements

Main Text

Main Text

■ Introduction

- Background of the Report
- Purpose and Scope
- Authorization
- Basic Principles or theories involved
- Methods of Gathering data
- Brief outline of methodology
- General Structure of the Report

□ Discussion

Most voluminous

It supports our conclusion and recommendation, analysis, logic and interpretation of the information

Conclusion

- Purpose: States briefly the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion.
- Content:
 - must be based on information presented in the discussion.
 - each conclusion should be presented as a separate paragraph,
 - with paragraphs numbered in sequence for easy reference
 - never suggest or recommend future action.

Recommendations

- Purpose: Suggests a course of action based on the findings and conclusions.
- Content:
 - must follow logically from the conclusions
 - must be supported both by the conclusions and by the data in the discussion

Supplementary Parts

Appendices

- Purpose: Includes data, which is not necessary to an immediate understanding of the discussion.
- **Content:** appendices can contain program listings, drawings, extra figures, technical specifications, or other detailed explanations of some aspects of your Report.
- The term “appendix” applies to only one set of data: for example, program listings would be in Appendix A and technical specifications would be in Appendix B.

Bibliography

- Purpose: Acknowledge use of materials from printed sources in the preparation of your report. Indicate exact source of all quotations and/or results of previous work.
- Content:
 - author's name, title of book, year published, publisher's name, city, ISBN number, page number
 - bibliographic entries are listed alphabetically by the name of the author or by the first major work of the title
- Example: Vetterli, C. "Technical Report Guidelines", *Internship Journal*, Vol. 1 No. 1, August 1992.
- Common knowledge does not require a reference, e.g. the speed of light the atomic weight of some element. If a new value for a commonly accepted quantity is cited, the source should be referenced.

Glossary

- List of unfamiliar words or uncommon technical terms which are beyond the understanding of the common reader.

Index

- It includes the word, technical terms and also different page numbers on which that word or technical term appears.

Books

- **Format:**

Author's last name, first initial. (Publication date).

Book title. Additional information. City of publication: Publishing company

- **Examples:**

- Allen, T. (1974). *Vanishing wildlife of North America*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society.
- Boorstin, D. (1992). *The creators: A history of the heroes of the imagination*. New York: Random House.

Formats of Report

- Preprinted format
- Letter format
- Memo
- Manuscript

Preprinted format

This format is used to fill in the blank reports which are relatively short and deal with routine information . This format is generally used for the routine reports such as the monthly status report where there is less scope of flexibility. The person filling these preprinted reports is required to tick against the listed items.

LETTER FORMAT

Used for reports that are short and external (Directed to outsiders).

Letter format can be used for informational as well as analytical reports. It includes all the normal parts of letter including a title or a subject line that clearly states the subject of the document . Besides letter format reports may have headings , footnotes , tables and figures.

Memo Format

Memorandum format is used for short reports that circulate within a company or an office.

It is a brief report. It is therefore , is called a miniature report. Periodic report are usually written in memo format and they are generally brief. But like longer reports they have headings or a subject line. Brevity or conciseness is one of its essential features.

Manuscript Format

- Used for formal reports
- These reports are usually long.
- Such reports require more elements before text ie prefatory part, and after that the supplementary part.
- They should include elements like title page, preface, letter of transmittal etc

Simplified format for writing a report

Name of Organization / Institution etc.

To

Ref. no.

From

Date:

Subject:

Main Body:

- 1) Introduction / Problem – Give an insight of the problem / topic
- 2) Facts/Findings – Points studied, observed, facts surveyed, investigated, problems noticed, work done.
- 3) Discussion/Analysis – Points discussed and analysis done
- 4) Conclusions/Recommendations – opinion of the investigating committee

Example of a Memorandum (Memo) Report

To: Ministry of Commerce and Industry

No. 98371-II-2015

From: Ramesh Singh (Under Secretary to GOI)

03 October, 2015

Subject: Shri M K Kapoor's Memorial

In returning the application of Shri M K Kapoor's memorial dated 14 September, 2015, the sender is directed to say that the Government of India absolutely declines to consider an application couched in such an impertinent language.

Shri Kapoor is, however informed that if he desires the matter to be considered by the Government of India, he must alter the tone of his letter and resubmit the same through proper channel through the Government of U. P.

(Ramesh Singh)

Under Secretary to GOI

A SAMPLE NEWS PAPER REPORT

REPORT TITLE: INDIA LOSES FIRST T20 MATCH

Main Body:

In spite of hurricane innings of 106 runs from just 66 balls by Rohit Sharma, India lost the first match of the T20 series against South Africa by 7 wickets. AB de Villiers and JP Duminy did the bulk of the damage, thrashing Indian Bowlers all over the ground.....

.....

.....

Name: XYZ

Place: Dharmshala

Date: 02 October,
2015

A SAMPLE BLANK FORM REPORT

Proforma for Appraisal Report of a Senior Research Fellow working on a project:

Name:

Designation:

Date of Birth:

Academic Qualification:

Title of the Project:

Details of Data Collection:

Details of the findings:

Recommendations:

Time taken in the completion of the Project:

Remarks:

I certify that the information given above is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Characteristics of a good Report

A report is used for various purposes by various departments such as industry, government, business or in the projects of science, engineering, medicine, research and space. The aim of a report is to convey information. This implies that facts should be imparted in direct, straight forward style.

The important features of a good report can be summed up under the following points-

- (i) Brevity – Brevity is the soul of wit', said Shakespeare.
- (ii) Clarity- Use of simple words and sentences.
- (iii) Accuracy – Correctness of expression
- (iv) Based on Facts
- (v) Objectively written (free from personal bias)
- (vi) Logical arrangement of ideas, where one idea leads to another

Points to bear in mind while writing a report on any topic

Report writing is an art. There are certain points which a report writer must bear in mind while writing a report. Some of which are as following:

- i) At the outset reporter should note the purpose of the report.
- ii) He should also see to whom the report is to be submitted.
- iii) The time limit, within which he will have to prepare the report, should be kept in mind.
- iv) What will be the impact of the report on the business and the businessman should also be kept in mind.
- v) Whether it is a newspaper report or a formal report, the reporter should have in mind the image of report's formal format, which should include the following:
 - a) Title of the report
 - b) Introduction
 - c) Procedure used to find facts
 - d) Findings of the report
 - e) Conclusion or recommendations or suggestions

Style of Writing reports

Style of Reports largely depends on

- The Reader
- The context
- The Purpose

(i) Brevity – Brevity is the soul of wit', said Shakespeare.

(ii) Clarity- Use of simple words and sentences.

(iii) Accuracy – Correctness of expression

(iv) Based on Facts

(v) Objectively written (free from personal bias)

(vi) Logical arrangement of ideas, where one idea leads to another

