

Reporting Writing

Purpose

- Why to use special formatting
- How to write
 - Language style
- Overall report structure
 - Which part first?
 - Where do details go?
- Specific features and examples
- Further study
 - References

Why use special formatting

- Reports typically written after writer has
 - Studied, Analyzed, Designed, etc.
- Prepared for managers
 - They see dozens? hundreds? of reports
- Report needs to be:
 - Precise
 - Concise
 - Easy to skim
 - Provide necessary detail for LATER in-depth study

What type of language

- The writing needs to be professional
- This is NOT creative writing
 - You are not trying to entertain your audience
- Don't get "cute"
- Don't use rhetorical questions

A Generic Report Format

- Title Section
- Executive Summary
- Methodology
- Introduction
- Main Body
- Data
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Appendices

Title Section

- Might just be a title page
 - Author
 - Date
 - Purpose of report
 - If a long report, include Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- Summary of entire report
- Be very clear, concise, and precise
 - Include problem that report is analyzing
 - Include main points, conclusions, and recommendations
 - This should NOT be wordy
 - Use bullet points when possible

- Include how you performed your research/analysis such as:
 - Talk with vendors
 - Use focus groups
 - Online research
 - Compare with similar corporations
- Explain WHY you used the methodology

Introduction

- First main section of your report
- Provides background
- Explains why report is important
- Explain what is covered in main body
 - Provide this in order of presentation
- Explain any terminology that is required

Main Body

- Obviously, this is the primary component of your report
- Organized information in order of priority
- Don't use long narratives
- Use lists if appropriate

Conclusion

- Summarize main body
- You may suggest what steps are needed next
- This will be relatively short

Recommendations

- Present any:
 - Solutions
 - Actions
- That result from your research findings

Appendices

- This will typically be ignored by your readers
- Provides all research data
- Include sources and references

Example

- See last 10 pages of “How to Write a Business Report”

More Information

- References
 - “How to Write a Business Report”
Victoria Business School, University of Wellington
 - “Writing a Report”
UNSW Business School
- Both are available on the Class Website