Formal Reports

Formal Reports Overview

Differences from Informal Documents:

1. **Complexity**: Formal reports often address more complex projects requiring thorough investigation.

2. **Length**: They tend to be longer due to the need for detailed information and analysis.

3. **Diverse Audience**: They are written for a wider range of readers, including technical and non-technical stakeholders.

Parts of a Formal Report

1. **Cover/Title Page**:

   - **Project Title**: Clearly state the title of the report.

   - **Recipient's Name**: Indicate to whom the report is addressed (e.g., "Prepared for [Client Name]").

   - **Author Information**: Include your name and/or organization (e.g., "Prepared by [Your Name/Organization]").

   - **Date of Submission**: Include the date on which the report is submitted.

2. **Letter/Memo of Transmittal**:

   - **Placement**: This section comes immediately after the title page.

   - **Content**: Summarize key points from the report and state why you are writing it. Highlight any significant findings or recommendations.

   - **Formatting**: Follow standard letter or memo conventions, such as using a formal tone and ensuring it is concise (ideally one page).

MEMO

TO: Karrie Camp, Vice President for Human Resources
FROM: Abe Andrews, Personnel Assistant   *aa*
SUBJECT: Report on Flextime Pilot Program at Boston Office
DATE: March 18, 2012

As you requested, I have examined the results of the six-month pilot program to introduce flextime to the Boston office. This report presents my data and conclusions about the use of flexible work schedules.

To determine the results of the pilot program, I asked all employees to complete a written survey. Then I followed up by interviewing every fifth person on an alphabetical list of office personnel. Overall, it appears that flextime has met with clear approval by employees at all levels. Productivity has increased and morale has soared. This report uses the survey and interview data to suggest why these results have occurred and where we might go from here.

I enjoyed working on this personnel study because of its potential impact on the way M-Global conducts business. Please give me a call if you would like additional details about the study.

M-Global Inc | 127 Rainbow Lane | Baltimore MD 21202 | 410.555.8175

12 Post Street
Houston Texas 77000
(713) 555-9781

Report #82-651
July 18, 2012

Belton Oil Corporation
PO Box 301
Huff Texas 77704

Attention: Mr. Paul A. Jones

GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION
DREDGE DISPOSAL AREA F
BELTON OIL REFINERY
HUFF, TEXAS

This is the second volume of a three-volume report on our geotechnical investigation concerning dredge materials at your Huff refinery. This study was authorized by Term Contract No. 604 and Term Contract Release No. 20-6 dated May 6, 2012.

This report includes our findings and recommendations for Dredge Disposal Area F. Preliminary results were discussed with Mr. Jones on July 16, 2012. We consider the soil conditions at the site suitable for limited dike enlargements. However, we recommend that an embankment test section be constructed and monitored before dike design is finalized.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with you on this project, and we would like to thank Bob Berman and Cyndi Johnson for the help they provided on-site. We look forward to assisting you with the final design and providing materials-testing services.

Sincerely,

George Fursten

George H. Fursten
Geotechnical/Environmental Engineer
GHF/dnn

M-Global Inc | 127 Rainbow Lane | Baltimore MD 21202 | 410.555.8175

3. **Table of Contents**:

- **Function**: Acts as an outline for the report.

- **Details**: Provide a complete listing of main and minor topics, including page numbers.

- **Purpose**: Helps readers quickly navigate the report to find specific sections.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4. **List of Illustrations**:

   - **Requirement**: Include this if the report contains multiple tables, figures, or images.

   - **Location**: It can be placed below the table of contents or on a separate page.

   - **Clarity**: Ensure the list is clear and informative, providing titles and page numbers for each illustration.

5. **Abstract/Executive Summary**:

   - **Overview**: Offers a brief summary of the report's main points, conclusions, and recommendations.

   - **Target Audience**: Written for a varied audience, including those who may not read the entire report.

   - **Accessibility**: Use simple language and avoid technical jargon to ensure comprehension.

6. **Introduction**:

   - **Purpose**: Clearly state the main goal of the report at the beginning.

   - **Scope**: Provide a detailed description of what the report covers and its significance.

   - **Format Overview**: Briefly outline the main sections that will follow to prepare readers for the content.

7. **Discussion Sections**:

   - **Content**: Present detailed findings and analyses related to the report's objectives.

   - **Organization**: Use headings and subheadings to organize information logically. Each section should focus on specific aspects of the findings.

- **Support**: Include relevant data, graphs, and examples to support your analysis.

8. **Conclusions and Recommendations**:
   - **Closure**: Summarize the key findings and their implications.
   - **Discussion of Results**: Reflect on what the findings mean in relation to the report's objectives.
   - **Recommendations**: Offer actionable suggestions based on the conclusions. This section should expand on the executive summary's recommendations.

9. **Appendixes**:
   - **Purpose**: Include supplementary material that supports the report but is not essential to the main text.
   - **Examples**: Can consist of raw data, detailed tables, charts, surveys, and other relevant documents.
   - **Importance**: Ensure the appendix contains information that enhances understanding but does not clutter the primary report.

10. **References**:
    - **Citations**: Use in-text citations whenever you incorporate information from other sources, including direct quotes and paraphrasing.
    - **Reference List**: At the end of the report, provide a comprehensive list of all sources referenced throughout the document, formatted according to a specified style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).
    - **Importance**: Proper referencing adds credibility to the report and allows readers to locate the original sources of information.

Writing an Abstract

Why?

1. **Selection**:

   After reading the abstract, one can make an informed judgment about whether the dissertation/article/report would be worthwhile to read.

2. **Indexing**:

   Facilitates the classification of information, making it easier for items to be retrieved.

When?

- **Submissions**:
  - Articles for journals (especially online)
  - Research grant applications
  - Book proposals
  - Ph.D. dissertations, M.A. theses, or project reports

- Conference paper proposals
- Book chapter proposals

- **Timing**:

Abstracts are typically written at the end of the project after the main work is completed.

Characteristics of a Good Abstract

- **Unified and Coherent**:

Written as one well-developed paragraph that stands alone.

- **Structured**:

  - Follows an introduction/body/conclusion format.
  - Presents the report's purpose, method, results, conclusions, and recommendations in that order.

- **Chronological Order**:

Strictly follows the order of information presented in the full report.

- **Logical Connections**:

Provides clear transitions between different pieces of information.

- **Summarization**:

Adds no new information; it simply summarizes the report.

- **Accessibility**:

Understandable to a wide audience, including those not familiar with the topic.

- **Limitations**:

Any major restrictions or limitations on the results should be stated using cautious language (e.g., "might," "could," "may," "seem").

Types of Abstracts

1. **Descriptive Abstract** (less than 100 words):

   - Indicates the type of information contained in the work.
   - Makes no judgments or provides results/conclusions.

   Example: The two most common abstract types—descriptive and informative—are described and examples of each are provided.

2. **Informative Abstract** (more than 250 words):

   - Presents and explains all main arguments and important results/evidence.
   - Provides a comprehensive overview without critiquing or evaluating the work.

   Example: Abstracts present the essential elements of a longer work in a short and powerful statement. They provide prospective readers with an opportunity to judge the relevance of the

longer work. Abstracts also include key terms, research purpose, and methods. There are two main types of abstracts: descriptive and informative. A descriptive abstract briefly describes the longer work, while an informative abstract presents all main arguments and important results. This handout provides examples of various types of abstracts and instructions on how to construct one.

Executive Summaries vs. Abstracts

- **Naming Variations**:

  Executive summaries may also be called abstracts, summaries, etc.

- **Purpose**:

  Abstracts are typically for scientific or academic purposes, while executive summaries are used for broader business or project reports.

Components of an Abstract (HOW)

1. **Background** (optional):

   Provide context or rationale for the research or report.

2. **Objective**:

   Clearly state the main aim of the research.

3. **Problem** (optional):

   Describe the problem being addressed or investigated.

4. **Methodology**:

   Briefly outline the methods used in the research or project.

5. **Results/Findings**:

   Summarize the key findings or results of the work.

6. **Conclusion**:

   Provide a concise statement of the overall conclusion derived from the results.

Brief Backgound	(optional)
Reason for writing	What is the importance of the research? Why would a reader be interested in the larger work?
Problem	(Optional) What problem does this work attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim?
Methodology	An abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study.
Reults/ Findings/ Implementation	An abstract of a scientific work may include specific data that indicates the results of the project.
Conclusion and Implications 28	What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work?

Compound Sentence Segmentation and Sentence Boundary Detection in Urdu

The raw Urdu corpus comprises of irregular and large sentences which need to be properly segmented in order to make them useful in Natural Language Engineering (NLE). This makes the Compound Sentences Segmentation (CSS) timely and vital research topic. The existing online text processing tools are developed mostly for computationally developed languages such as English, Japanese and Spanish etc., where sentence segmentation is mostly done on the basis of delimiters. Our proposed approach uses special characters as sentence delimiters and computationally extracted sentence-endletters and sentence-end-words as identifiers for segmentation of large and compound sentences. The raw and unannotated input text is passed through preprocessing and word segmentation. Urdu word segmentation itself is a complex task including knotty problems such as space insertion and space deletion etc. Main and subordinate clauses are identified and marked for subsequent processing. The resultant text is further processed in order to identify, extract and then segment large as well as compound sentences into regular Urdu sentences. Urdu computational research is in its infancy. Our work is pioneering in Urdu CSS and results achieved by our proposed approach are promising. For experimentation, we used a general genre raw Urdu corpus containing 2616 sentences and 291503 words. We achieved 34% improvement in reduction of average sentence length from 111 w/s to 38 w/s (words per sentence). This increased the number of sentences by almost three times to 7536 shorter and computationally easy to manage sentences. Resultant text reliability and coherence are verified by Urdu language experts.

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Method: The raw and unannotated input text is passed through preprocessing and word segmentation. Urdu word segmentation itself is a complex task including knotty problems such as space insertion and space deletion etc. Main and subordinate clauses are identified and marked for subsequent processing. The resultant text is further processed in order to identify, extract and then segment large as well as compound sentences into regular Urdu sentences. Urdu computational research is in its infancy. Our work is pioneering in Urdu CSS and results achieved by our proposed approach are promising. For experimentation, we used a general genre raw Urdu corpus containing 2616 sentences and 291503 words.

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