

Letter

Letter writing is a skill people need for personal, professional and academic purposes. Letters come in many forms, from digital to hard copy and informal to formal. Knowing how to format and write effective letters when corresponding with professionals as well as acquaintances.

Types of Letter

Formal Letters

The letters that follow a certain formality and set pattern are formal letters. Such letters are precise, directly addressing the concerned issue and are kept strictly professional in nature. Formal letters are short and to the point. A variety of letters that fall within the category of formal letters are –

- Business letters
- Official letters
- Social letters
- Circular letters
- Employment letters

Letter writing format of Formal Letter

A formal letter must adhere to the prescribed format. The letter writing format of a formal letter is as mentioned below:

1. Sender's address
2. Date
3. Receiver's address
4. Subject
5. Salutation
6. Body of the letter
7. Complimentary closure
8. Signature line: sender's name, signature and designation

- Sender's address: One of the most essential components, also known as the return address. It is the mailing address of the sender. The address and contact details of the person sending the letter are written here.
- Date: Immediately after the sender's address comes the date on which the letter is written. Candidates, while writing the letter in the exam, can follow any of the formats to write the dates: DD/MM/YY OR MM/DD/YY.
- Receiver's address: The corresponding address, i.e. the address of the recipient of the mail is written here. Candidates must start with the receivers' designation followed by the

name of the organization and then the full address, Pincode and country (if the information is known).

- **The subject:** This highlights the aim of writing the letter. The subject of the formal letter should be very brief (6 to 8 words) and must be preceded by the word 'Subject'. The receiver, through the subject, understands the purpose of the letter at a glance.
- **Salutation:** This is a customary greeting to the recipient of the letter. If the name of the recipient is known, the salutation starts with 'Dear' followed by Mr/Mrs/Miss, etc. If the person is unknown or even the gender is not known the recipient can be addressed as Dear Sir/Dear Madam.
- **Body:** The most important element of any letter. It furnishes the reason behind writing the letter. For formal letters, candidates should use short, clear, logical paragraphs to state the subject matter. The body of the letter is generally divided into 3 paragraphs:
 1. Introduction that states the main point.
 2. Middle part: Supporting points and details to justify the need and importance of letter writing.
 3. Conclusion: Request for some action or what is expected.
- **Complimentary Closure:** This is to end the letter with respect in a polite manner such as 'Yours faithfully', 'Yours sincerely', etc.
- **Signature Line:** This is the last part where the sender of the letter signs off with his first or last name. The signature line may also include a second line for the title or designation of the sender.

Candidates writing formal letters in the exam must remember the following pointers.

- Use of colloquial words, short forms, slang language and abbreviations are restricted.
- The letter must be to the point, precise and clearly indicating the message.
- The subject line is very important in Formal Letters.

Informal Letters

Informal letters are written to close acquaintances of the writer, their friends, family, relatives, etc. Since they are written to close relations the letters have an informal and personal tone. Casual language is used while writing informal letters. And sometimes the letters may even have an emotional undertone.

Informal letters are mainly used for personal communication. So they do not have to follow any specific pattern, format or conventions. They can be written as per the writer's wishes and the requirement of the situation. So the letter is written in a personal fashion in casual unassuming language.

Sector 17
Vashi
New Bombay

6th July, 2013

Dear Maya

Thank you very much for your last letter. It was great to hear from you after so many months. You seem to be having a nice time in France.

Thanks also for the photographs. I absolutely loved that snap of yours standing in front of the Eiffel Tower. France looks stunning. Someday, I would definitely like to go there.

There's not much happening here. I am busy with my work and kids.

By the way, are you coming home anytime soon? If you are, let me know the dates and we can arrange to meet up.

Hope to see you soon!

Aditi

Format of Informal Letter

Candidates writing informal letters need to follow the below-mentioned format.

1. Address
2. Date
3. Salutation
4. Body of the letter
5. Sender's name and signature

1. Address: The sender's address is important in informal letters. Since informal letters are personal letters and sent to acquaintances or people who are known, the receivers' address is only mentioned on the envelope carrying the letter.
2. Date: Same as in a formal letter format.
3. Salutation in informal letters can be Dear/Dearest/ Hi/Hello followed by the first name/nickname of the recipient.

4. Body: The body in the informal letters can be long and detailed containing diverse feelings, experiences, advice, news, etc.
5. Sender's name and signature are the same as in the formal letters.

Important Tips For Good Letter Writing

Candidates appearing for competitive exams are encouraged to follow the below-mentioned tips to write a good letter in the examination and fetch good marks.

- Candidates must be able to identify the type of letter they will write. For example: writing a letter to the Principal asking for leave is a formal letter, but writing a letter to the Principal to catch up after a long time would be an informal letter.
- Opening and closing of letters must be in the correct manner. Formal letters must open and close in a professional manner while informal letters can be directly addressed to the person with greetings. Even closing the letters is significant. Formal letters always end respectfully and impersonally, whereas informal letters may end with a more personal touch.
- In formal letters, making clear the purpose of the letter immediately is important. Candidates writing formal letters must make sure to get to the point as soon as possible.
- A letter is always supposed to be considerate and polite. It is essential to use polite words and civil language in all types of letters, be it formal or informal. Even if the letter is about any complaint, the point must be made in a careful and courteous manner.
- The length of the letter also holds relevance. In formal letters, the matter should be expressed to the point, precise and short, while the length of the personal or informal letter depends on the message and the relation to the recipient.

What is a Business Letter? (Definition)

A business letter is a professional, formal letter that is sent by one company to another. These letters can be used for professional correspondence between business clients, employees, stakeholders as well as individuals.

Whether you need to tell a potential client about your product, collaborate with another company, convince someone to attend your event, or give a thank you note – a **well-written business letter** can stand out.

Types of Business Letters

1. Cover Letters

First up, a cover letter is a one-page document that candidates submit along with their resumes. It takes the employer on a guided journey of their greatest career & life achievements.

No matter if you're a student or an experienced professional, a cover letter is an important document to show your skills, experience, and why you're fit for the position you are applying for.

Tips:

- Don't try to fit your whole career in your cover letter. It should have a carefully curated collection of stories.
- Don't state a skill that you don't actually have. You'll definitely regret it when you're asked to use that skill in the interview.
- Keep it concise and to the point. The employer does not have time to sit down and read an entire memoir.

2. Business Invites

These letters are a formal way to reach out to a company or an individual and invite them to attend an event hosted by your company.

As business events tend to be formal, an invitation letter is most likely to be formal as well. But, if you are organizing a casual event, it should be reflected in your invite and tone.

Tips:

- Write the letter in such a way that it builds anticipation about the event.
- Clearly mention the date, time, and venue.
- Set a friendly follow-up to remind them of the event.

3. Complaint Letter

This letter is a way to formally express your disappointment formally. You can report a bad experience, poor customer service, or let a company know that their products didn't meet your expectations.

The key to this letter is that it shouldn't sound like you are nagging, but also shouldn't lose its importance if you want to be taken seriously.

Tips:

- Don't get too emotional or over-the-top angry. Just state the facts.
- Be cordial and professional. Let them know the entire story and how'd you like them to rectify their mistakes.

4. Letter of Resignation

A letter of resignation is a document that notifies your employer that you're leaving your job. Whether you work at a coffee shop or a big-shot company, it's proper protocol to submit a letter of resignation before you leave.

Also, if you have an urge to send an incendiary letter of resignation, don't give in! You might cross paths with these people again.

Tips:

- Keep it simple, stick to the facts, and don't start complaining. Resignation letters are not the right place for complaints & critiques.
- Thank your boss and/or the company for the opportunities and describe some of the key things you learned on the job.
- If you're in a high-profile position, consider your words super carefully because your letter would likely be made public.

5. Order Letters

Also known as "purchase orders", these letters are used to order things or buy material. They act as a legal record, documenting the transaction between the buyer and seller.

These letters are generally written by one business to another business to make an order or to modify it.

Tips:

- Be concise and clear to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion.
- Include everything the seller would need to deliver the order and get the payment.
- Provide contact information for future conversations or follow-up.

Invitation

Invitation Letter – An **invitation letter** is a written or verbal request inviting someone to go somewhere or to do something. *An invitation is a request, a solicitation, or an attempt to get another person to join you at a specific event.* When you ask people to attend a party, visit your beach house, or witness your marriage, you invite them by giving them an invitation.

Invitations are of two kinds:

- Formal → invitation card/letter → In a fixed format
- Informal → A letter or a note → Free handwriting

Formal invitations are sent to relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc. on social occasions. A simple yet elegant printed card is preferred.

Invitations are written in the third person.

Example:

- Mr. and Mrs. S. Surendran request the pleasure of the company of Mr. and Mrs. Rajkumar.....

Note that the English etiquette requires the husband's name to be written first.

Example:

- Mr. and Mrs. G. Joseph

Avoid the use of abbreviations for the names of guests, days, dates. However, the abbreviation RSVP (Repondez's'il Vous plait) which means "Please Reply" is put at the bottom.

The subject matter is written in the centre setting. Details such as an address, dress code, or any other instructions are written at the bottom to the left or the right as per choice or convenience.

How to Write an Invitation Letter? (Steps)

Invitation letters are written exactly the way normal letters are written except for a few details here and there. Nonetheless, let's take a look at all the steps involved in the process of writing invitation letters...

Step 1. Write the subject line (if you're sending emails)

Your subject line should contain the essence of your letter. For instance, if you need to invite the parents of the graduating batch of your high-school, your subject line should look something like – "Invitation for the graduation ceremony of Class of 2020"

Step 2. Add your letterhead

This step is a must for when you are writing a formal invitation. You just need to add your organization's letterhead at the very top of the letter. Letterheads symbolize the prestige of your organization in a professional light.

Step 3. Mention the Sender's Address

The first thing that you need to mention right after adding your letterhead (only in cases of formal invitation letters) is the sender's address. This is also an extremely crucial step because this is the address where the guests will send in their RSVP's.

Step 4. Write the Date

After mentioning the sender's address, you need to mention the date of sending out the invitations.

You can mention the date in any format that you'd like – 12/07/2020 or 7th December 2020 or December 7, 2020.

Step 5. Mention the Recipient's Address

The next step is to mention the recipient's address, along with writing their names.

This step ensures that the recipient can be sure that it's them who's been invited to the event. (We're just kidding, obviously.)

Step 6 Include the Salutation

Always begin your letter with a greeting. You may write – Dear Madam/Sir if you do not know the recipient's name. If you do know the name of the recipient, write down their first and last name, and add a salutation in front of it. For example, 'Dear Elizabeth Brown'

End the salutation with a comma and skip a line. You must always try to find out the full name of the individual that you're sending the letter.

Step 7. Write the Main Body of the Letter

You should always start your invitation letter with phrases like...

- We're pleased to welcome you...
- Our organization will be honored to welcome you as a guest...
- It would be a pleasure for us if you could come...
- We would be glad if you could come to...
- On behalf of our organization, we would like to welcome you...

Writing phrases like these at the beginning of the letter demonstrates your respect and happiness towards inviting an individual to the event. After you've written that, specify the intent of the event clearly in the first paragraph itself.

Mention the most important details like the date, time, and venue in the first paragraph itself. This information should be accessible at the very beginning of the letter as it would be convenient for the recipient to find these important details without reading the entire letter again.

In the second paragraph, you should mark yourself as the host of the event. You must describe the event's purpose and why you believe it needs to be attended by the recipient.

Step 8. Include the closing and signature

Express your gratitude towards the recipient for considering your invitation. Mention that you're looking forward to seeing them at the event. In case you're going to call the person to get a response from them, mention the date on which you're planning to make that call.

In case you want the recipient to confirm their presence via email or by filling in a form, indicate the deadline by which you expect them to confirm their presence.

After writing all of this, write your contact information (email, phone number, etc.). Mention your designation if you are writing a formal invitation letter on behalf of the company. This way any individual can easily contact you if they have any questions related to your event.

Step 9. Proofread your Letter

Have a final look at your letter before you send it out! Make sure that the grammar is correct, the punctuations are okay, and that there are no spelling errors. Also, ensure that your text doesn't include incomplete sentences or jargon words.

Invitation Letter Format

Format of a formal invitation

The **format** shall include-

1. Name of the host
2. Standard expression (E.g., request the pleasure of your company, solicit your gracious presence)
3. Purpose of the invitation
4. Name of the honouree
5. Day, date and time of the event- Dates must be written in letters and you should not use abbreviation.

6. Name of the place, location with complete address- Enter the address, the venue of the party or event
7. RSVP (Respond if it pleases you)- Include an RSVP – this elegant abbreviation comes from the French phrase "Répondez, s'il vous plait"; which in English means "Please respond". An RSVP is essential at parties where you need to know exactly who will come, so you can organize things accordingly on the basis of their convenience.
8. Telephone or mobile number or address of the host
9. Any other relevant details

Format of an informal invitation

SENDER's ADDRESS- The sender's address is usually put on the top right-hand corner of the page.

DATE (In expanded) – The sender's address is followed by the date just below it, i.e. on the right side of the page. This is the date on which the invitation is being written. It is to be written in expanded form.

RECEIVER's ADDRESS

SUBJECT- Then we sum up the purpose of writing the invitation in one line. This helps the receiver focus on the subject of the invitation in one glance. It is important to underline the subject.

SALUTATIONS- This is where you greet the person you are addressing the invitation to.

———**BODY**———

COMPLEMENTARY CLOSURE- Mention the name given in the question paper. Do not mention your personal details.

DESIGNATION

Features of a Formal invitation are as follows-

1. The invitation should be written in third person and not in first or second person.
2. Simple present tense is used.
3. A polite and courteous tone should be used.
4. It is a single sentence presentation.
5. No signatures required.
6. Dates must be written in letters and you should not use abbreviation. However, date of writing must not be mentioned.
7. It ought to explain why the party or event is being held, "to celebrate..." or "to honour..."
8. Length as per CBSE guidelines is limited to 50 words.
9. It is generally enclosed in a box.
10. It should answer to the 5Ws:

1. WHAT- The occasion
2. WHEN- Date and time
3. WHERE- Venue
4. WHO- Name of the host

Features of an informal invitation are as follows-

1. They are written to friends, relatives, and acquaintances.
2. They follow the pattern of ordinary personal letters.
3. They are written in first/second person.
4. The style and tone is relaxed and informal.
5. Different tenses are used as per the demand.
6. The letter can be elaborative explaining the details of the event.

Example of Formal Letters

You are Faiz/Falak Mazumdar living at 39, Udampur Colony, Shimla. You decide to hold a dinner party to congratulate your grandparents on their golden wedding anniversary. Draft a formal invitation in not more than 50 words to all family members to attend a grand dinner at home. 4 (2018)

Answer:

Faiz/ Falak Mazumdar
request the pleasure of your benign presence
at the grand dinner
on the auspicious occasion of the
GOLDEN WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
Of
His/her
Grandparents
At his/her
residence
39, Udampur Colony, Shimla
At 8:30 pm
On
18 MARCH, 20XX
R.S.V.P.
Faiz/ Falak Mazumdar
98100XXXXX

Write an invitation in not more than 50 words to your friend Rameshwari to spend her winter break with you in Mumbai. You are Puja/Puneet of 25, Vikas Road, Mumbai. (COMPARTMENT 2018)

Answer:

25, Vikas Road

Mumbai

10 December, 20XX

Dear Rameshwari

As the winters are approaching, I invite you to spend the winter break with me at my house in Mumbai. At that time, the weather here is pleasant due to sea winds. I will introduce you to my parents and close relatives. Kindly confirm your arrival by mid- December.

Yours affectionately

Puja/Puneet

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

The term CV is **an abbreviation** of the Latin word **Curriculum Vitae**, which is literally translated to “the course of your life”.

A CV is a very in-depth document that describes your career journey step-by-step, including all sorts of personal information. You can look at the CV as a **comprehensive description** of everything you have ever done, all the achievements you are proud of, and all the publications that bear your name.

You need to update your CV every time you accomplish something new academically or professionally. Meaning, whenever you get a new job, publish something new, obtain a new certificate, and so on.

There is no rule of thumb on **how long a CV should be** - depending on the amount of experience, it can range from 2 to 8 pages.

What to Include on a CV

1. Full name
2. Contact information
3. Professional title, resume summary, or resume objective
4. Research interests
5. Education
6. Publications (both academic papers and books)
7. Teaching or lecturing experience
8. Work experience
9. Conferences and courses

10. Skills
11. Certificates
12. Languages
13. Grants of fellowships
14. References

In Elizabeth's CV, you can see a summarized snapshot of her life: everything she has studied, all the conferences she has been to, the skills she obtained, and a list of her publications.

Since she's applying for a job in a university, Elizabeth mentions her academic achievements and interests first, and professional experiences later.

Academic Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Elizabeth Smith

Marketing Lecturer

Experienced academic with two publications regarding Digital Marketing and Search Engine Optimization, holding a BA in Business Administration and a MSc. in Business Analytics from Northwestern University.

elizabeth.smith@novoresume.com

123-456-7891

Colorado, United States

elizabeth-smith.com

linkedin.com/in/elizabeth.smith

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Search Engine OptimizationContent CreationClient Recruitment and RetentionInternational Marketing

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Marketing
Columbia Business School
08/2019 - Present
Research Area
- Extending Social Perception Theories to Advertising and Search Engines Context

MSc in Business Analytics
Kellogg School of Management
08/2018 - 06/2018
Course & Dissertation
- Data Analysis
- Brand Management
- Machine Learning
- Dissertation: The Effect of Social Media Content in Search Engine Optimization

BA in Business Administration
Colorado State University
08/2014 - 06/2018
Dissertation
- The Effect of Search Engine Optimization in Digital Marketing

Magna Cum Laude

Summa Cum Laude

PUBLICATIONS

Book
Search Engine Optimization: Digital Marketing New Wave
Author(s)
Elizabeth Smith & Richard Doe
2018
Penguin Publishing

Academic Article
Digital Marketing Implications of Content Management and Distribution
Author(s)
Elizabeth Smith & Richard Doe
March, 2017
Journal of Marketing

CONFERENCES & COURSES

AMA Cincinnati's Trailblazer Series (2019)
American Marketing Association

Adobe Marketing Summit (08/2018)
Adobe Inc.

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Lecturer in Introduction to Digital Marketing
Colorado State University
08/2018 - Present

WORK EXPERIENCE

Search Engine Marketing Specialist
Hub Digital Agency
09/2018 - 05/2019
Achievements
- Utilized SEO principles and successfully audited over 200 websites from 5 different niches: Fashion, Education, Human Resources, E-commerce, Art & Culture.
- Increased lead generation of the agency by 20% within the first 6 months by creating 4 "How-to" guides on the blog.
- Contributed to the increase by 35% of new clients in 2017 compared to 2016.

Marketing Intern
ABC Agency
05/2018 - 10/2018
Achievements
- Increased social media presence of the company by 23% in the last 3 months.
- Drafted a new on-boarding email process that increased the email open rate from 31% to 36%.
- Created 2 marketing-related articles per month which had on average 150 social media shares each increasing brand awareness.

CERTIFICATES

Hootsuite Social Marketing Certification (03/2019)

Google Ads Certification (08/2018)

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Social Media Volunteer
Help Africa
10/2014 - 05/2017
Tasks/Achievements
- Created "Do you really care?" campaign on Facebook and Twitter that raised \$130,000 in donations for the cause during the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2016.

GENERAL SKILLS

SEO & SEMWordpressHTML & CSSCRO and A/B TestingKeyword OptimizationWeb AnalyticsEmail MarketingProject/Campaign ManagementVerbal and Written CommunicationPublic Speaking

LANGUAGES

English
Native

Spanish
Full Professional Proficiency

French
Limited Working Proficiency

Italian
Limited Working Proficiency

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Resume

A **resume** is a short, straight-to-the-point, document created for the purpose of applying to a specific job.

Unlike the CV, you should try to **keep a resume as short as possible**. In 99% of the cases, you'd want to keep your resume to 1-page max. If you have 15+ years of experience, or really

believe that the extra information you can mention can add value to your application, you can make it 2 pages tops.

In a resume, you only mention the aspects of your work experience and skills that are relevant to the job you're applying for. A good resume highlights specific contributions you have made in your previous work and showcases how your different skills can be useful for the position you are applying to.

The resume is usually accompanied by the submission of a cover letter which states your intent for applying to the job. The cover letter **builds upon the skills and experience** you have touched upon in your resume, explaining how they're going to help you excel at the job you're applying for.

Making a resume and continuously updating it can be a hassle. Want a modern-looking resume done in less than 5 minutes? Try our online resume builder. It's free, and you can select amongst 8+ templates.

What to Include on a Resume

1. Full name
2. Your job title, or the name of the position you're applying for
3. Contact information
4. Resume summary or objective
5. Work experience
6. Education
7. Relevant skills
8. Languages and proficiency
9. Relevant certifications and interests (if any)

Report Writing

A report is a brief account of an event that has already taken place. The report helps in recording the events of importance that occur in our day-to-day life. It attempts to present the firsthand information of an incident or event. A report of an event presents a record of events that took place. A report of an event includes one's ideas, opinions and impressions about the event.

A report is a short, sharp, concise document which is written for a particular purpose and audience. It generally sets out and analyses a situation or problem, often making recommendations for future action. It is a factual paper, and needs to be clear and well-structured.

Requirements for the precise form and content of a report will vary between organisation and departments and in study between courses, from tutor to tutor, as well as between subjects, so it's worth finding out if there are any specific guidelines before you start.

Reports may contain some or all of the following elements:

- A description of a sequence of events or a situation;
- Some interpretation of the significance of these events or situation, whether solely your own analysis or informed by the views of others, always carefully referenced of course (see our page on Academic Referencing for more information);
- An evaluation of the facts or the results of your research;
- Discussion of the likely outcomes of future courses of action;
- Your recommendations as to a course of action; and
- Conclusions.

Not all of these elements will be essential in every report.

Kinds of Reports

Business Reports

Business reports are actual documents that inform by summarizing and analyzing a particular situation, issue, or facts and then make recommendations to the group or person asking for the report. The goal of these reports is usually one of the following:

- To examine potential and available solutions to an issue, situation, or problem
- To apply business and management theories to produce different suggestions for improvement
- To show your evaluation, reasoning, and analytical skills in recognizing and considering possible solutions and outcomes
- To make conclusions about an issue or problem
- To produce a range of suggestions for future action
- To present clear and concise communication skills

A business report can include some of the following sections

Executive summary

The focus of analytical dashboards is accumulating insights for complex data over the past month, quarter, etc. You use these insights to understand what happened and what made it happen, as well as what you should do or change to positively affect them in the future.

Table of contents

This part is added if the business report is lengthy. It's a list of the main topics and the page where they can be found in the report.

Introduction

Highlights the major topics covered in the business report and gives background information about the reason for collecting the data.

Body

Describes the issue, the data obtained, and the way it was obtained and discusses important findings. You can break the 'body' into subsections with subheadings which emphasize the particular point covered in that subsection to make the report easy to read as well as understand.

Conclusion

Explains what can the information described in the body of the report mean, and what conclusions can be drawn. It usually gives suggestions on how to use the data to improve a certain aspect of the business. Sometimes, the conclusion can suggest additional research.

Reference

A part of the report which includes other sources of information you've used to research and obtain the data included. References prove the facts you've stated in the business report and allow readers to review the original data sources.

Appendix

This part is optional and includes any pictures, charts, or additional research that's not cited in the body of the report, but it's still relevant to the topic of discussion.

Informational Reports

You ask for this report when you want objective information on something. It presents non-biased facts without explaining the reasons and the possible outcomes of a situation. It is the ideal business report for learning things such as the number of employees, the role each of them plays in the company, or the departments the employees work in.

Analytical Report

This type of business report is usually required when a company is trying to make an important decision. An analytical report analyzes the company's situation, presenting relevant information, explanations, and conclusions. It helps the company to make good decisions going forward.

Research Report

This is the most comprehensive type of business reports required when a company considers trying something new, such as going into a new geographical area or offering a new product. A team of specialists or researchers are given a topic and asked to find all the relevant statistics and details obtained from an informational report, followed by a detailed analysis of the data found in the analytical report. The conclusion of the research report will be based on the available data obtained from the analytical and informational reports.

Progress Report

You want this report to show how things are going at the moment. A progress report isn't based on analysis or tons of research. Instead, they are an update for the person who needs it. One example of this could be a weekly report disclosing the progress made throughout the week and what tasks you're looking to work on in the upcoming week.

Technical Report

A technical report usually is more detailed than an article published in a journal or a paper presented at a conference. It contains sufficient data to enable a reader to evaluate the investigative process of original research or development. It is an end product of an investigation, survey, research project etc. Technical report, the primary recording medium for R & D work, has become an important source of information in recent years. This is mainly because of the time consuming routines of publication procedures of journals and their preference to publish completed research as against research in progress. But many a time, the nature of communication does not require wide dissemination and so a technical report is brought out. Further, the government-funded research results in the areas of space, nuclear sciences, and defense is generally shrouded under secrecy and national security and so is circulated to a very limited people. All these factors have resulted in the emergence of the technical report, which is issued in different sizes and formats.

Technical reports are characterized by their objectivity and targeted audience. They define the problem, analyze and assess the current and future conditions, describe the method experiment to solve a problem, discuss the results, draw conclusions and recommend future course of action.

Types of Technical Reports

Technical reports include technical papers, memoranda, proposals, progress and status reports, feasibility reports, technical manuals, investigation reports etc. A technical report may be a letter, an article, a research paper, an operational manual, a news bulletin, a company brochure, a book review etc. It includes preprints, institutional reports, and committee reports also under technical reports literature. Depending on the purpose and information content, reports can be classified as informal and formal reports.

Informal reports usually present the results of investigations and convey information of products, methods and equipment. The informal nature makes these more accessible, and easy to be adapted to any situation. These are generally meant for immediate superiors and colleagues in an institution. Analysis reports, trip reports, laboratory reports, field reports, inspection reports, etc.

Formal reports provide information which is needed by the management for decision making. Thus a formal report will have a larger target readership as compared to the informal report, and serve as a main source of information. Formal reports include project proposals, progress or status reports (half-yearly, annual etc), state-of-the-art reports and review reports, trend or critical evaluation reports, feasibility reports, etc. Types and characteristics of some of the above mentioned reports are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

Committee Reports Many a time when a major decision is to be taken, the government or its department constitutes committees to go into various aspects of the issue. These issues include policy formulation, restructuring the organisation, prevention of losses due to hazards, etc. Usually, all the members in such committees will be experts in their fields and these reports provide very valuable information, including the pros and cons of an issue and a plan of action.

Feasibility Reports These reports discuss the practicality, in physical and economic terms, of a new project (for example, feasibility reports on the establishment of DELNET, CALIBNET etc), new product development of a new program, purchase of a equipment plant or machine, or

reallocation of a factor?; site. A feasibility report generally includes explanation of the problem, present standards on criteria, subject-items to be analysed, and examination of the scope of analysis. Feasibility reports may also include cost-effective analysis. Alternative routes available to complete the project and a minimum time required to achieve a breakeven point in cases where returns are expected.

Institutional Reports These reports describe the activities and progress of projects. Undertaken by an institution or establishment. These include technical information on programs, details of infrastructural and manpower resources, and summaries of research undertaken during the period of the report. As such these reports provide valuable information not available elsewhere. The annual reports of the government departments and agencies, private and public R&D laboratories, and professional societies belong to this category of reports.

Reprints

These can be taken as the informal reports of individual authors. These are circulated to the colleagues or professionals who are working in the same field for their comments. The relevant comments made by them, if any, are incorporated and then submitted to a primary journal or presented in a conference/symposium. The format of the preprint will be that of a research paper published in a professional periodical.

Proposal

Project Proposals

Project proposals are chiefly prepared for getting sanction of projects or approval of a developmental works or getting grants and contracts. These are not circulated before or after the purpose for which they were prepared. Most of the times, the information included is proprietary in nature. These are different from other types of reports because they deal with future plan of action and method of implementation of a project. The main characteristics of a proposal are the statement of intention, willingness, and qualifications and expertise to accomplish a task as per a definite time schedule. This may also include information about the capabilities of existing facilities, financial, infrastructural and manpower considerations. Convincing the peers to obtain financial support or sanction of project is a hidden function of a proposal. Generally, proposals include a letter of transmittal. Title, executive summary, table of contents, introduction, overview

analysis of the problem, statement of the problem, methodology and infrastructural facilities needed to complete the project.

Elements of Proposal

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

- A. “The introduction is the part of the paper that provides readers with the background information for the research reported in the paper. Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research”.
- B. In an introduction, the writer should
 - 1. create reader interest in the topic,
 - 2. lay the broad foundation for the problem that leads to the study,
 - 3. place the study within the larger context of the scholarly literature.
- C. Theories, theoretical frameworks, and lines of inquiry may be differently handled in quantitative and qualitative endeavors.

II. Statement of the Problem

- A. “The problem statement describes the context for the study and it also identifies the general analysis approach”

It is important in a proposal that the problem stand out—that the reader can easily recognize it. Sometimes, obscure and poorly formulated problems are masked in an extended discussion. In such cases, reviewers and/or committee members will have difficulty recognizing the problem.

A problem statement should be presented within a context, and that context should be provided and briefly explained, including a discussion of the *conceptual or theoretical framework* in which it is embedded. Clearly and succinctly identify and explain the problem within the framework of the theory or line of inquiry that undergirds the study.

III. Purpose of the Study

- “The purpose statement should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall purpose of the study”. If the purpose is not clear to the writer, it cannot be clear to the reader.

Briefly define and delimit the specific area of the research. You will revisit this in greater detail in a later section. Foreshadow the hypotheses to be tested or the questions to be raised, as well as the significance of the study. These will require specific elaboration in subsequent sections.

IV. Review of the Literature

“The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research problem. It should establish the need for the research and indicate that the writer is knowledgeable about the area”.

The literature review accomplishes several important things.

1. It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported.
2. It relates a study to the larger, ongoing dialogue in the literature about a topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies.
3. It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other findings.
4. It “frames” the problem earlier identified.

V. Questions and/or Hypotheses

- A. *Questions* are relevant to normative or census type research (How many of them are there? Is there a relationship between them?). They are most often used in qualitative inquiry, although their use in quantitative inquiry is becoming more prominent. *Hypotheses* are relevant to theoretical research and are typically used only in quantitative inquiry. When a writer states hypotheses, the reader is entitled to have an exposition of the theory that led to them (and of the assumptions underlying the theory). Just as conclusions must be grounded in the data, hypotheses must be grounded in the theoretical framework.

VI. The Design--Methods and Procedures

- A. “The methods or procedures section is really the heart of the research proposal. The activities should be described with as much detail as possible, and the continuity between them should be apparent”.
- B. Indicate the methodological steps you will take to answer every question or to test every hypothesis illustrated in the Questions/Hypotheses section.

E. Sampling

1. The key reason for being concerned with sampling is that of *validity*—the extent to which the interpretations of the results of the study follow from the study itself and the extent to which results may be generalized to other situations with other people.
2. Sampling is critical to *external validity*—the extent to which findings of a study can be generalized to people or situations other than those observed in the study. To generalize validly the findings from a sample to some defined population requires that the sample has been drawn from that population according to one of several *probability* sampling plans. By a *probability sample* is meant that the probability of inclusion in the sample of any element in the population must be

given *a priori*. All probability samples involve the idea of *random sampling* at some stage (Shavelson, 1988). In experimentation, two distinct steps are involved.

F. **Data Collection**

1. Outline the general plan for collecting the data. This may include survey administration procedures, interview or observation procedures. Include an explicit statement covering the field controls to be employed. If appropriate, discuss how you obtained *entré*.
2. Provide a general outline of the time schedule you expect to follow.

G. **Data Analysis**

1. Specify the procedures you will use, and label them accurately.

VII. Limitations and Delimitations

- A. A *limitation* identifies potential weaknesses of the study. Think about your analysis, the nature of self-report, your instruments, the sample. Think about threats to internal validity that may have been impossible to avoid or minimize—explain.

VIII. Significance of the Study

- A. Indicate how your research will refine, revise, or extend existing knowledge in the area under investigation. Note that such refinements, revisions, or extensions may have either substantive, theoretical, or methodological significance. Think pragmatically (i.e., cash value).
- B. Most studies have two potential audiences: practitioners and professional peers. Statements relating the research to both groups are in order.

IX. References

Only references cited in the text are included in the reference list; however, exceptions can be found to this rule. For example, committees may require evidence that you are familiar with a broader spectrum of literature than that immediately relevant to your research. In such instances, the reference list may be called a *bibliography*.

Appendixes

The need for complete documentation generally dictates the inclusion of appropriate appendixes in proposals (although this is generally not the case as regards conference proposals).

Definition of Reference

Reference can be understood as the act of giving credit to or mentioning the name of, someone or something. In research methodology, it denotes the items which you have reviewed and referred to, in the text, in your research work. It is nothing but a way to acknowledge or indirectly showing gratitude, towards the sources from where the information is gathered.

While using references, one thing is to be noted that you go for reliable sources only, because it increases credence and also supports your arguments. It may include, books, research papers, or articles from magazines, journals, newspapers, etc., interview transcripts, internet sources such as websites, blogs, videos watched, and so forth.

These are used to inform the reader about the sources of direct quotations, tables, statistics, photos etc. that are included in the research work.