Rubric for STAT 550 Short Reports

Note: A short report is approximately 1000-1200 words in length, or 3-5 pages, excluding the graphics.

Summary: one third to one half of a page

- Stands on its own to provide the reader with a clear capsule version of the report.
- Focuses on a clear statement of the problem (a "big picture"), the key methodologies used and the main results.
- Is less than 10% of the report (with 30% of the summary on the objectives, background, problem, and methods; 70% on data analysis, results and findings).
- Uses the present tense; indicative mood.

Introduction: one third to one half of a page

- Stands on its own as a lead-in to present the report.
- **Does not summarize the report.**
- **Does not detail the data analysis and results.**
- Provides a broad, general view of the topic and its background.
- Includes a clear statement of the detailed objectives (the problem(s) the report intends to solve).
- Summarizes the significance, scope and methodology.
- Ends with an overview of the body sections.
- Uses the present tense; indicative mood.

Results

Note: Results here includes Data Analysis which can be a section by itself in a longer report.

- Describes the data.
- Describes the statistical methods used. **
- Describes the process of data analysis. ***
- Reports the findings. ****
- Uses the past tense to describe the data analysis process and the present tense to report findings.

Note: Given the explorative nature of problem solving in statistics, **, *, and **** can be integrated into a step-by-step problem solving process, beginning with data analysis and ending with findings.**

Conclusion(s) and (Recommendations): one third to one half of a page

- Does not include new data or analysis.
- Summarizes the results; uses the present tense and indicative mood.
- Interprets the findings for a non-statistician, if applicable.
- Recommends further investigation of the problem if necessary; uses the future tense or subjunctive mood.

Rules of thumb:

Point of view: Use the first-person point of view to describe what you did, have done or will do. Use the third-person point of view to describe and analyze data and to report, discuss or explain findings. However, often for consistency and to avoid confusion caused by constant switch between different point of views, some people choose to use the third-person point of view throughout the report, which often leads to the use of passive voice. The good thing of using the third-person point of view and passive voice is it actually draws attention to the topic without focusing on the doer (s) and can be more concise.

Verb tense: Use the present tense to describe data, report findings, and interpret data. Use the past tense to describe the data analysis procedure. However, make sure not to switch from the present to the past within a sentence or paragraph unless it is appropriate in the context. For example, "The experiment ***was completed*** last week. I ***have completed*** the analysis. The results ***show***…, but more analyses ***will be needed*** in the future." Here are some rules of thumb for your consideration:

- Use the past tense for historical facts.
- Use the present tense for timeless facts or truth.
- Use the present perfect tense (have+ the past participle) for a relationship between the past and the present.
- Maintain the present tense for all reports of current or timeless actions, process, or states.

Moreover, avoid careless errors in verb tense. For instance,

"We examined the patterns in the missing data…. It turns out that most of the missing samples occurred during…. the treatment…."