

# Writing Technical Reports

Based on work by NASA   

# The Steps to Report Writing

## Before writing

1. Gather the Data
2. Analyse the Data
3. Sort the Data
4. Outline the Report

## Writing

5. Writing the First Draft
6. Revising the Draft ! ! !

# Gathering and Analyzing the Data

See the first half of the class!

# Sorting the Data

- What do I need to tell my audience about?
- What results are worth discussing?
- Which visuals serve this purpose?

This stage is where you determine **what results should be presented in a report**

## Step 3.5 - A Limiting Sentence

Write **one sentence** describing the subject, scope, and purpose of your report.

# NASA's Limiting Sentence

## *Subject*

The Lewis Research Center guide "Technical Report Writing"

## *Scope*

covering the fundamentals of organizing, writing, and reviewing NASA technical reports,

## *Purpose*

was written to improve the writing skills of Lewis technical authors and the overall quality of their reports

# Outline the Report

Without an outline most inexperienced authors write reports that are confusing and difficult to follow

-- NASA

# Making Your Outline

- Make it detailed!
  - The more you plan, the less you have to do later
- What sections will your report need?
  - Name them now!
- Choose a method that works for you
  - Flash cards you can organize
  - Mind Maps
  - Bullet points in a document
  - Whatever you like!



# Write the First Draft

1. Write a draft right after you complete your outline
2. Review this draft for technical accuracy/organization
3. Review the draft to focus on wording and clarity

**THIS IS STILL JUST THE FIRST DRAFT!**

# Revise the Draft

1. Set the draft aside for a while (maybe a couple days)
2. Review the draft for
  - a. Substance (Do you support your conclusions? Are the visuals and tables necessary?)
  - b. Is the organization clear and appropriate?
  - c. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.

Each review should be complete and independent of the others. At this point, you should have worked through your document **AT LEAST SIX TIMES**

# Style Tips - Part 1

1. Be clear
2. Keep it short
3. Be objective
  - At the very least, be clear when stating opinions vs facts

# Style Tips - Part 2

## 1. Write naturally

- Don't be overly formal
- Don't bother with words outside of your vocabulary

## 2. State your conclusions as soon as you can

## 3. Emphasize major ideas