Writing Technical Reports

Based on work by NASA 🚀🌔❤️

The Steps to Report Writing

Before writing

1. Gather the Data

2. Analye the Data

3. Sort the Data

4. Outline the Report

Writing

5. Writing the First Draft

6. Revising the Draft ❗❗❗

Steps 1/2 - Gathering and Analyzing the Data

See the first half of the class!

Step 3 - 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

Step 4 - 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!

Step 5 - 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!

Step 6 - Revise the Draft (REPEATED)

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

4. Write naturally
  - Don't be overly formal
  - Don't bother with words outside of your vocabulary

5. State your conclusions as soon as you can

6. Emphasize major ideas

Your Assignment

Rewrite your summary from the midterm!

Exercises for Presenting