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Course Project: Formal Recommendation Report or Proposal

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Objectives

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Given information on a technology or business-related issue presented in a case study, evaluate and integrate outside research to create a well-organized and documented formal analytical report or proposal using at least six sources, including books, articles, interviews with subject matter experts, and websites or databases, and prepare a set of presentation slides to accompany the proposal.

Guidelines

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Beginning in Week 2, you will work through the weekly research stages and writing process toward the creation of an 8- to 10-page Formal Recommendation Report or Proposal and accompanying PowerPoint show, either narrated or for use during an onsite presentation of your final report.

Topic: Topic suggestions are provided in Doc Sharing; however, if there is a topic you'd like to use that is not on the list, please contact your instructor for approval. Please note that the topic must be appropriate for either a recommendation or proposal report. Review Chapters 11 and 12 in the text for a description of these reports.

Audience: The audience for this report is an industry decision maker, such as your supervisor or CEO, or a public policymaker, such as a politician or bureaucrat, who could act upon your recommendations or proposal. You will identify this decision maker in the Course Project topic proposal that you will submit in Week 2.

Research: Six academic and/or professional research sources are required. Your research must consist of a variety of electronic sources (websites, databases, media) and traditional sources (books, journals, magazines). All sources must be cited using the American Psychological Association (APA) documentation system.

Final Report/Proposal Details

As noted above, the final product will consist of an 8- to 10-page report or proposal on a technical or business topic from the approved list in Doc Sharing or your own topic with approval from your instructor. The final document includes the following.

- **Title page** (one page)
- **Cover letter** (one page, one or two paragraphs, single spaced)
- **Table of contents** including list of illustrations (one page)
- **Executive summary** (one page, two or three paragraphs, single spaced)
- **Body of report or proposal** using the following required sections.
 - Introduction
 - Discussion sections
 - Conclusions and Recommendations
- **Six research sources** provided on APA formatted References page (one page). All references included on the Reference page must be cited in-text.
- **Technical Illustration or visual** such as a chart, graph, or image that you have created or have located via academic research. This should be incorporate within the main body of the report and be mentioned in-text.
- **Formatting Elements** (discussed in Chapter 5 in the textbook).
 - Single spacing (or 1.15), double spacing between sections and/or paragraphs
 - 12-point font size for main body of writing
 - Arial, Calibri, Cambria, or Times New Roman font type
 - Use of headings and subheadings when appropriate
 - Paragraph length of approximately five to seven sentences
 - Standard 1" margins
 - Ragged right justification

Note: Sample formal reports are found in the textbook on pages 334, 388, and 431. There are some formatting and heading variations depending on the type of report but all include the required sections.

Multimedia PowerPoint Presentation Details

You will present your report in a multimedia technical briefing in Week 7 using a narrated PowerPoint slide show. The instructions for creating this project can be found under Course Home and iConnect. Details include

- eight to 10 slides, including
 - introduction slide with the report title and your name;
 - two to three slides per each main point of report;
 - a memorable conclusion slide;
 - use of full sentence, meaningful headings, and short words or phrases within the body of the slides;
 - a minimum of two meaningful visuals;
 - use of a business-appropriate design template; and
 - 5–7 minutes of narration.

Milestones

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Please see the chart below for the topics, deadlines, and deliverables. Under the chart, you will see details for each week's assignments.

As you will see, there is much work to be done. We will, however, be walking through each stage together. Keep up each week, and you will have no problems succeeding. You will definitely want to feature your formal report in your professional portfolio to show to employers.

Lastly, don't forget about your other assignments unrelated to this Course Project.

NOTE: Because the course requires other assignments, working ahead on your Course Project is an excellent idea. Doing so will free you up when there are longer weekly assignments.

Week	TCOs	Topics	Deliverables
1	1, 4	Final formal report begins in Week 2	None
2	1, 3	Topic proposal including audience, purpose, and tentative thesis.	Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic Proposal
3	2, 6	Annotated references page with six credible sources in APA format.	Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annotated references • Minimum of six sources written in APA format
4	4, 6	Outline, in-text citations, References page	Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline using required outline template found in Doc Sharing
5	1, 6	Formal report first draft (includes technical illustration, in-text citations, and a References page), originality report.	Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of final formal report including technical illustration, in-text references, and a References page
			Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letter and executive summary (it should also be included in your final report)

6	7, 8	Cover letter and executive summary, peer reviews	<p>Submit the first draft of your formal report to the Peer Review discussion topic for peer review by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Wednesday. Your grade for your peer review is given in your discussion grade this week.</p> <p>Submit the two peer reviews you did for your classmates to the Peer Review discussion topic by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday.</p>
7	5,6	Final formal report, multimedia technical briefing	<p>Submit the following to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. (MT) Sunday:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal report • Presentation
8	All	Final Exam	No Course Project items due

Weekly Course Project Deliverables

Week 2: Course Project Launch and Topic Proposal

This week, you will choose a technological or business topic that you would like to investigate for your Course Project. It could be related to your current job, future career, or your Senior Project. However, the topic must be one that fits the parameters of a recommendation report or proposal and addresses a business audience, such as a company executive or decision maker. Make sure to select a topic that will interest you throughout the course. Topic suggestions are located in Doc Sharing. If there is a topic you'd like to use that is not on the list, please contact your instructor for approval.

Unless you are using a real-world issue from your own workplace to develop for this project, you will need to create a few details to help frame the direction for your project. To this end, your topic proposal should include the following.

Title: What is your preliminary title for the report?

Audience: Who will be reading your report or proposal? Is this solicited or unsolicited? In other words, have you been asked to investigate this topic or are you making a suggestion to someone who has not directly asked for it? Are there secondary audiences for the report?

Purpose: What is the overall goal of the report or proposal? What is your objective?

Thesis statement: State the main points you intend to use to develop your argument. Be sure to include at least three main points. See the thesis writing section in the lecture this week.

Submit your thesis to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. Sunday for instructor feedback.

Week 3: Annotated References List

This week, you will create an annotated References page, including six sources for your report. Include a minimum of three traditional sources (books, newspapers, magazines, journals, and databases, such as EBSCOhost). Electronic sources (credible websites, etc.) are acceptable for the remainder. Your Annotated References list should include the following.

Correct APA format: All six references must be listed in correct APA format. Make sure to view the APA Guide for Citing Sources tutorial located at the bottom of the Syllabus. There are also several links to APA citation sites provided in the Webliography.

Credible sources: All references, whether they are traditional or electronic, should be from credible sources written by identifiable experts or professionals in the field.

Well-written annotations: Three of the six references must be annotated in a meaningful manner. In other words, provide a short (100-word) description of the article and indicate how it applies to your topic. The annotations must be written in your own words. Note that all references included in your final report must be cited in-text within the report.

Submit the preliminary outline with the bibliographic information for the six sources to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Week 4: Outline

This week, you will create an outline of your formal report. You must use the **Outline Template** located in Doc Sharing for this assignment. Your outline should include the following.

Information for all sections of the report: Be sure to fill in every section of the outline template with the required information.

In-text citations: In-text citation for all sources listed on your References page must be included within the outline indicating how you used each of the sources listed on the References page.

References page: Include the References page you created in Week 3.

Submit the outline to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Week 5: Formal Report First Draft

This week, you will create a rough draft of the formal report that will include all the required sections of the report, along with in-text citations and the References page. Note that the executive summary and

cover letter will be written and submitted in Week 6. The report must be organized and formatted correctly using guidelines in Chapter 10 and the sample report beginning on page 334 in the text as a model. To recap, the draft should include

- a cover or title page;
- a transmittal letter (not required for draft);
- a table of contents;
- a list of illustrations;
- an executive summary (not required for draft);
- an introduction;
- discussion sections;
- conclusions and recommendations;
- a references page; and
- an appendix (optional).

As noted, you are required to create or locate an appropriate technical illustration, such as a chart, graph, diagram, or schematic to help convey a point in the report. You may use a software application, such as Excel or Visio. You could also create an image or photograph using a digital camera or some graphics package.

You must import the illustration into the formal report. It should be labeled correctly with a title and caption. If you did not create the illustration yourself, be sure to include a proper citation for it.

Submit the formal report first draft with the technical illustration included to the Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Week 6: Cover Letter, Executive Summary, and Peer Review

Executive summary: In Week 6, you will create an executive summary that accurately describes the entire report in a condensed one-page version. See pages 318–320 for a discussion and sample reports for examples.

Cover letter: You will also create your cover letter (or transmittal letter) and add it to your formal report. Information for this part of the project is on pages 314–316 of your text.

Peer review: You should submit the first draft of your report to the Peer Review Discussion Forum by 11:59 p.m. Wednesday for peer review. You will be completing a review of another classmate's report by 11:59 p.m. Sunday. Your grade for your peer review is given in your discussion grade this week.

NOTE: You must use the Peer Review feedback form in Doc Sharing for this assignment.

Week 7: Final Report and Technical Briefing

Final Report: Your final report is due this week. The final report must follow the formatting elements described above and include the following components.

- Cover or title page
- Transmittal letter
- Table of contents
- List of illustrations
- Executive summary
- Introduction
- Discussion sections
- Conclusions and recommendations
- References page
- Appendix (optional)

Technical Briefing (narrated PowerPoint): Create a 5–7-minute multimedia technical briefing based on the highlights of your formal report. You will record your presentation using the audio narration function within PowerPoint. You will need a headset microphone. The directions are located in the iConnect Present section under Course Home.

You should create eight to 10 highly effective slides. The following details apply.

How many slides? Your PowerPoint slides should align with and support the points of the thesis. A good rule of thumb is approximately two to three slides per main point of your report or proposal. You also need a title slide that appears during your introduction and a slide that appears during the conclusion of your presentation. This adds up to approximately eight to 10 slides.

Slide design: Use a business- or professional-design template with appropriate font styles, sizes, and colors. PowerPoint has choices. Keep fonts consistent and easy to read. Follow the design principles for visual aids found in your text and in the Week 7 Lecture.

Slide content: Write full-sentence headlines that summarize or synthesize the content in the slide body and tell a coherent story from start to finish. Bullet slide copy with words or short phrases; do not put in paragraphs of text.

Visuals within the PowerPoint: You are required to include a minimum of two visuals within your slides. More is better. Clip art (cartoon-type images, etc.) is not acceptable. Good visuals include charts, graphs, tables, diagrams, maps, screenshots, photos, and other images that add meaning and value to the presentation and make the information easier to comprehend for the audience.

Presentation time frame of 5–7 minutes: Remember to preview and review. When we make oral presentations, we always tell the audience where we are taking them, and then end with a summary of where we have been. So, for your presentations, preview your main areas or points in the opening, and then review those same points in your closing to reinforce the messages and signal the ending of the speech.

Submit the final presentation to the Week 7 Dropbox by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Submit the final report with cover letter and appendix to the Week 7 Course Project Dropbox by 11:59

p.m. Sunday.

Grading Rubrics[Back to Top](#)

ENGL 216—Week 2 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional Comments
Topic Proposal		
Thesis Statement and Purpose: The thesis statement clearly defines the topic of the report or proposal and outlines the main points to be discussed. The purpose of the report/proposal is clear.	10	
Audience: An appropriate audience is described along with any secondary audiences. The report is identified as either solicited or unsolicited. (2 points each)	8	
Writing Style and Mechanics: The tone is appropriate for the audience and the purpose. Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.	2	
Total	20	Points Earned /20
ENGL 216—Week 3 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional Comments
Annotated References		
Quality of Sources: All six sources are credible (from academic or professional-industry authors as indicated in the instructions) and clearly relate to the main topic. (2 points each)	12	
Format: All sources are accurately documented in APA style in the form of a correctly formatted APA References page. (2 points each)	12	
Annotations: Three of the six sources are annotated and show understanding of main ideas and how each source relates to the main topic. Each is approximately 100 words in length. (7 points each)	21	
Writing Style and Mechanics: The tone is appropriate for the	5	

audience and the purpose. Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.		
Total	50	Points Earned /50
ENGL 216—Week 4 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional Comments
Outline		
Introduction Section: Purpose (Explains why the project was carried out and the report written.) Description and background (Briefly describes the project and includes facts readers must know to fully understand the discussion that follows.) Scope (Defines the parameters of the report, describes the ground covered by the report, and outlines the methods of investigations. If needed, discusses limiting factors.)	9	
Discussion Section: Appropriate amount of information are provided (all points filled in on the template). Organization of facts or arguments used is logical.	20	
Conclusion Section: States the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion. Based entirely on previously stated information. Does not introduce new material or evidence to support your argument.	4	
Recommendations Section: Indicates your chosen solution based on the information presented in the discussion and conclusion.	4	
References and In-Text Citations: References page contains each source used in the in-text citations (parenthetical documentation). There are in-text citations for each piece of information in the outline that is not common knowledge. Every reference listed is cited in-text, demonstrating how the source was used. References page and in-text citations are formatted in APA.	9	

Writing and Format: There are no grammar, punctuation, spelling, and so forth, errors. The outline follows the organization and format of the template.	4	
Total	50	Points Earned /50
ENGL 216—Week 5 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned /and Additional Comments
Rough Draft Report		
Cover or Title Page: All required information, as described on page 313 in the text, is included.	2	
Table of Contents: Lists the correct section names and page numbers.	3	
Introduction Section: Purpose (Explains why the project was carried out and the report written.) Description and background (Briefly describes the project and includes facts readers must know to fully understand the discussion that follows.) Scope (Defines the parameters of the report, describes the ground covered by the report, and outlines the methods of investigations. If needed, discusses limiting factors.)	6	
Discussion Section: Appropriate amount of information is provided (at least three main points are used). Detail is thorough. Organization of facts or arguments used is logical.	20	
Conclusion Section: States the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion. Based entirely on previously stated information. Does not introduce new material or evidence to support your argument.	3	
Recommendations Section: Indicates your chosen solution based on the information presented in the discussion and conclusion. Written in strong, definite terms to convince readers that the course of action is valid. No new evidence or ideas are	3	

introduced.		
Technical Illustration: Simple and uncluttered Effectively depicts one main point Positioned close to narrative Labeled with a figure or table number and title, caption, or comments located beneath Referred to at least once in the report	10	
References and In-Text Citations: References page contains each source used in the in-text citations (parenthetical documentation). There are in-text citations for each piece of information in the outline that is not common knowledge. Every reference listed is cited in-text, demonstrating how the source was used. References page and in-text citations are formatted in APA.	10	
Format/Organization: Report is organized as described in Chapter 10 (use sample report beginning on page 334 as a model.) Correct use of formatting elements is included. Effective use of headings and subheadings throughout. Single spacing (or 1.15), double spacing between sections and/or paragraphs. 11- or 12-point font size for main body of writing is used. Arial, Calibri, Cambria, or Times New Roman font type is used. Paragraphs of approximately five to seven sentences for most. Standard 1" margins are used. Ragged right justification is used.	8	
Writing Style and Mechanics: The tone is appropriate for the audience and the purpose. Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.	5	
Total	70	Points Earned /70
ENGL 216—Week 6 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned /
Executive Summary and Transmittal Letter		Additional Comments
Executive Summary:	25	

Summary is one page or less. Technical jargon is avoided. Major points, conclusion, and recommendation are included. Main document is not referred to. Paragraph format is used.		
Transmittal Letter: Includes the major point from the document. Acknowledges any help received (if applicable). Follows proper letter conventions.	10	
Writing Style and Mechanics: The tone is appropriate for the audience and the purpose. Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.	5	
Total	40	Points Earned /40
ENGL 216—Week 6 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional Comments
Peer Review		
Contributions: All sections of the Peer Review form were filled in with meaningful comments. Comments added value and included ideas and suggestions for improvement and/or what was right about the work.	30	
Writing Style: Comments were written in a user friendly, “you attitude” tone and style. Reviewer provided constructive criticism in a nonthreatening and productive manner.	10	
Writing Mechanics: Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.	5	
Timeliness: Reviewer submitted his or her own paper by the Wednesday deadline. Note: No late reviews are accepted for partial credit on this assignment.	5	
Total	50	Points Earned /50

ENGL 216—Week 7 Course Project: Final Report	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional Comments
Cover or Title Page: All required information, as described on page 313 in the text, is included.	3	
Transmittal Letter: Includes the major point from the document. Acknowledges any help received (if applicable). Follows proper letter conventions.	3	
Table of Contents and List of Illustrations: Lists the correct section names and illustration page numbers.	5	
Executive Summary: Summary is one page or less. Technical jargon is avoided. Major points, conclusion, and recommendations are included. Main document is not referred to. Paragraph format is used.	5	
Introduction Section: Purpose (Explains why the project was carried out and the report written.) Description/background (Briefly describes the project and includes facts readers must know to fully understand the discussion that follows.) Scope (Defines the parameters of the report, describes the ground covered by the report, and outlines the methods of investigations. If needed, discusses limiting factors.)	8	
Discussion Section: Appropriate amount of information is provided (at least three main points are used). Detail is thorough. Organization of facts or arguments used is logical.	21	
Conclusion Section: States the major inferences that can be drawn from the discussion. Based entirely on previously stated information. Does not introduce new material or evidence to support your argument.	5	
Recommendations Section:	5	

Indicates your chosen solution based on the information presented in the discussion and conclusion. Written in strong, definite terms to convince readers that the course of action is valid. No new evidence or ideas are introduced.		
Technical Illustration: Simple and uncluttered. Effectively depicts one main point. Positioned close to narrative. Labeled with a figure or table number and title, caption, or comments located beneath. Referred to at least once in the report.	10	
References and In-Text Citations: References page contains each source used in the in-text citations (parenthetical documentation). There are in-text citations for each piece of information in the outline that is not common knowledge. Every reference listed is cited in-text, demonstrating how the source was used. References page and in-text citations are formatted in APA.	10	
Format and Organization: Report is organized as described in Chapter 10 (use sample report beginning on page 334 as a model). Correct use of formatting elements are included. Effective use of headings and subheadings throughout. Single spacing (or 1.15), double spacing between sections, and/or paragraphs. 11- or 12-point font size for main body of writing is used. Arial, Calibri, Cambria, or Times New Roman font type is used. Paragraphs of approximately five to seven sentences for most. Standard 1" margins are used. Ragged right justification is used.	15	
Writing Style and Mechanics: The tone is appropriate for the audience and the purpose. Sentences are complete, clear, concise, well-constructed, and varied. Rules of grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation are followed.	10	
Total	100	Points Earned /100
ENGL 216—Week 7 Course Project:	Points possible	Points Earned / Additional

Narrated PowerPoint Presentation		Comments
Voice: The speaker uses a conversational voice and varies tone to underscore main points, project energy, and enthusiasm during the presentation. The speaker does not read the speech or slides. The speaker does not use uhs, ums, or other distracting expressions. Sentences do not end with an "up" inflection unless they are questions. The language is professional. The speaker stays within the 5- to 7-minute time limit.	20	
PowerPoint Slides: A business-appropriate design template is used. The design principles for slide shows, as detailed in the lecture, are used, including easy-to-read fonts and business colors. The body of the slides contain only short words or phrases and not paragraphs of text. The slides contain a minimum of two visuals that aid viewer comprehension of the topic. No cartoon clip art is used.	20	
Content: The thesis or point of presentation is clear. The presentation supports the main points, enhances the speaker's words, and contains parallelism in writing and formatting. Slides have meaningful headlines that summarize or synthesize the body content and tell a coherent story from start to finish. The presentation reflects a correctness of expression and does not contain spelling, punctuation, or other errors.	20	
Total	60	Points Earned /60
Course Project Total	440	Points Earned /440

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