

REPORT 1 MEMO: Read, Reflect, Respond (7%)

DUE DATE: Jan 10-12, 2025

REQUIREMENTS: Actively read ONE of the following articles

- Henri Petrosky, [Engineers as Writers](#)
- Edward Tufte, [PowerPoint does Rocket Science](#)
- Chuck Letourneau, [The Plain Web](#)

CONTENT: Referring closely to your article (either Petroski, Tufte, or Letourneau), compose two well-developed paragraphs (400-500 words total), in which you explain the following:

- **Your main take away from the reading (~200 words).** Provide brief **attribution** to the source (i.e. author, date, + “title”) to align with **Academic Integrity**, then in your own words **paraphrase** the main ideas and information you derived from reading the article. Because the goal is for you to express understandings *you hold in mind* – i.e. insights you gained from the reading that remain with you—aim to keep the assignment closed book as much as possible, though you may certainly dip into it for specific bits of information (e.g. names, places, dates, numbers) you may wish to include.
- **Your response to the reading (~200 words).** Comment on what you found interesting, notable, or meaningful in what you learnt (*ideas; information; insights*), explaining how or why you found it relevant or noteworthy. For instance, did anything in the reading surprise you? Did it leave you with any questions? How will you apply the information and/ or the ideas you read about; how might these insights be useful in relation to course outcomes, larger University goals, and/ or broader life skills? You can respond in a variety of ways; there is no “correct” answer here so long as your work shows evidence of thoughtful thinking.

GENRE & FORMAT: For this assignment, present your content in the form of a professional **MEMO**, a vital workplace genre intended to convey important information to others *within the same workplace*. As per genre conventions for a memo, use the appropriate **format**, plus formal, professional language and tone.

In addition, aim to include **ONE bulleted list** at some point in your memo. To create an effective list, make sure that you create a coherent grouping of related items and present each item in the list in grammatically parallel form.

To do well on the formatting aspects of the assignment, carefully review the following resources under **Module 1** (and in particular the [Tasks & Actions page](#)):

- My slides on the **function and structure of memos** versus email
- **Sample memos** to enable you to “see” what a memo looks like in practice
- My handout on using **MS Word** to auto-generate effective, professional lists
- My handout on **grammatical parallelism** (essential for effective listing)

ORGANIZATION: Compose clear, unified **paragraphs**. Provide an over-arching **topic sentence** for each paragraph that encapsulates the main point you want to make about what you read. Use **transitions** (e.g. *also; in addition; however; as a result; in contrast*, etc.) to build bridges between points. And conclude each paragraph with a handy **recap** of your main point (*topic sentence*) to pull everything together and provide a sense of closure.

EXPRESSION: Keep in mind that in this report, as with every assignment this term, your ability to fulfill requirements for content, structure, and format forms a crucial part of the assessment, though of course assignments are also judged on the **quality of the writing**. Hence, at every point in composing your report, view your work critically, asking always:

will my readers understand what I am saying, or showing, here? Is there a possibility they may be confused in any way? Is the writing clear and correct? Are sentences and paragraphs carefully composed? Are points clearly and logically sequenced? Have transitions been used to bridge points within paragraphs? Have typos and other errors been eliminated?

In other words, strive to appeal to readers on many levels at once to maintain overall **credibility as a professional engineer** and a **professional writer**. Reserve some time to review and revise your work for accuracy and clarity.

OUTCOMES: As prospective engineers, you'll frequently be called on to read, reflect, and respond on given information. People rely on engineers to offer an informed perspective or judgment on complex information and to communicate their understanding of it — what it means — in a clear, understandable way.

This is an especially prominent duty right now. As Jahanir Khan, chief editor of *IEEE Canadian Review* points out, “amidst the loss and worries of Covid-19 pandemic” – up to and including its aftermath – it is up to engineers to “share the facts, not misinformation” [1, p. 4]¹, an ethical obligation to which engineers, including software engineers, are bound by their professional Code of Conduct.

A key goal of this first writing assignment, therefore, is for you to learn something hopefully of interest related to your engineering major, reflect on it, draw some thoughtful conclusions, and express your understanding as clearly as possible. It will also allow me to gauge where the class stands and for you to get some brief feedback on your writing early in the course.

RUBRIC: ENGR 120 Report 1 – Description of Grades

Description of A-level work	
All assignment requirements fully met or exceeded; outstanding achievement of all or most objectives; fully meets all criteria. Memo and listing formats are used to excellent effect. Content shows meaningful understanding of the article, expert use of attribution to align with academic integrity, and thoughtfully developed, relevant insights, clearly and coherently organized. The writing has many obvious strengths	Overall, writing is highly readable, coherent, concise, and well organized, with a clear, effective development. Content, format, organization, style, and overall design reflect a high degree of professionalism. There are many strengths here, with few, if any, suggestions for revision

¹ [1] J. Khan, “A few words from the Editor-in-Chief,” *IEEE Canadian Review* [online], no. 83, pp. 3-4, Spring 2020. Available: <https://canrev.ieee.ca/en/cr83/>

and no obvious need for revision. The writer demonstrates thorough grasp of standard English conventions (spelling, punctuation, grammar, usage); typos are absent, showing careful attention to detail.	
Description of B-level work	
All or most requirements met; very good or good achievement of all or most objectives. Most criteria have been met, with some weaknesses in one or more of content, organization, development, or language. Memo and listing formats are well used. Content shows good grasp of the article, makes effective use of attribution to align with academic integrity, and offers a mostly well-organized, well-developed reflection, though may be somewhat generic or unfocused at times. The writer demonstrates solid grasp of standard English conventions; errors are few and mostly minor. At the lower end of the B range, weaknesses are more numerous, and needed improvements more evident.	Overall, the writing is readable, coherent, concise, and well organized. Content, format, organization, style, and overall design reflect an appropriately professional approach Strengths far outweigh weaknesses, although revisions can be suggested that would improve one or more of the above aspects.
Description of C-level Work	
A number of assignment requirements met; some achievement of most objectives. A number of criteria have been met, but with some major weaknesses in content, format, organization, development, and/ or style. Memo and listing formats are attempted, but is lacking some aspects. Content shows grasp of the given article, though may lack precision and detail. Attribution is provided, though some details may be missing. Satisfactory effort at reflection has been made but would benefit from additional development and/ or more effective organization. The writer demonstrates reasonable grasp of standard English conventions; however, the writing contains ongoing and/ or obvious errors, which impede fluency though not understanding. At the lower end of the C range, only some assignment requirements have been met; deficiencies come close to outweighing strengths.	Overall, the writing is readable, but lacks one or more of clarity, organization and conciseness. Content, format, organization, style, and overall design convey a competent level of professionalism, but the need for improvements in one or more key areas is more obvious. Both weaknesses and strengths are evident, and though strengths still outweigh weaknesses, needed revisions are more numerous, undermining overall professionalism.
Description of D-level Work	
Some assignment requirements met; marginal achievement of assignment objectives; Few criteria have been met, such that quality of work is lacking in key aspects. Parts of the assignment may not be fully completed; and/ or there may be serious flaws in content, format, organization, attribution, development, and language use. The writer demonstrates a basic grasp of standard English conventions, but the writing lacks fluency and clarity.	Overall, the writing lacks focus and coherence. There is an attempt to develop and elaborate required content, format, organization, and style, but a frequent need for revision undermines overall effectiveness; content, format, organization, and style do not convey a professional approach to the task. Weaknesses come close to outweighing strengths. Needed improvements are numerous and obvious.
Description of F-level Work	
Some requirements may be met, but there is less than minimal achievement of objectives and criteria. Content is nonspecific, redundant, and often distracting; some sentences may be correctly constructed, but connections between ideas are missing or unclear. Frequent usage errors impede fluency and comprehension. The assignment does not meet minimal expectations for competency or professionalism.	Work is characterized by a number of serious flaws, which may reflect the writer's lack of effort, comprehension, fluency, or a combination of these deficiencies. Overall, the assignment is poorly developed or unclear; it lacks a clear direction and forces the reader to infer connections between ideas. Weaknesses outweigh strengths.