

Informational Report for Non-Expert Readers

 tracigardner.github.io/TechComm/assignments/informational-report/informational-report-assignment.html

Your Task

Worth 20% of your course grade

Write an **informational report for non-expert readers** on a subject that is rooted in your major and that serves others and contributes to the greater good.

Your report will define that subject and discuss it with the goal of informing your readers about it fully and with relevant, specific details.

Review [Document Samples](#) and the [Deliverable Checklist](#) as you work.

▼ Hide the Learning Objectives

This assignment will develop your ability to:

- **Research and explain a technical subject clearly and objectively** for a non-expert audience, emphasizing its relevance to fairness, accessibility, and community benefit.
- **Define and describe your subject in depth**, including what it is, how it works, who developed it, and its historical and social context.
- **Analyze how your subject addresses real-world social challenges** without taking a personal stance, instead presenting expert perspectives and relevant evidence.
- **Design an accessible, visually engaging report** that uses headings, internal definitions, and at least four relevant visual aids—including two data visualizations—to support reader comprehension.
- **Demonstrate audience awareness and ethical use of sources** by citing 6–10 credible sources correctly, using a consistent documentation style, and following guidelines for integrating research.

Your Audience

Write your message to a non-expert audience that is responsible for making a decision about the subject covered in your report.

They have an interest in both the subject and its social applications but know relatively little about either. It is up to you to define that audience.

You might write for town council members whose constituents could benefit from the subject, policymakers considering implementation, or concerned citizens interested in social solutions. See [Sample Scenarios & Decision-Making Audiences](#).

Assignment Requirements

Basic Requirements

- **Genre:** Formal Report.
- **Length:** 7–9 pages, including Works Cited or References page.
- **Headings:** Main and lower-degree as needed.

Visuals Requirements

- **Number:** At least 4 *relevant* visual aids, including 2 data visualizations, drawn from data provided by your research into the subject.
- **Examples:** Photographs, tables, charts, and the like. No clip art.
- **Location:** On the same pages as the textual references to them, after the point in the text where such references are made. Do not put visual aids on separate pages unless it is absolutely necessary due to size.
- **Caption:** A two-part caption (Figure 1: Description of Figure 1) for each visual.
- **Integration:** Refer directly to the visual in the text before you show it (See Figure 1, as Figure 1 notes, etc.).

Documentation Requirements

- **Number:** At least 6–10 outside sources, including materials from the web and other acceptable sources.
- **Style:** Use your discipline's documentation style (e.g., engineers use IEEE, biologists use CSE).
- **In-Text Citations:** Cite ALL information taken from an outside source, according to your discipline's style.
- **Full Citations:** List ALL sources in your Works Cited, References, or Bibliography (include on a separate page of the report), according to your discipline's style.
- **Help:** See [Working with Outside Sources](#).

Formatting Requirements

- **Page size:** 8.5 x 11 (portrait)
- **Format:** Text running from left to right margin, hierarchical headings, text wrapped around images, and 1" margins all around.
- **Spacing:**
 - Single or 1.15 spacing between lines.
 - Double space between paragraphs and before and after headings and lists.
- **Pagination:** Upper right or bottom right.
- **Paragraphs:** Do not indent.
- **Font Choices:** Arial, Calibri, Verdana, Aptos, or Helvetica

Report Structure

Include these sections and information in this order:

- **Title Page** (~1 separate page)
- **Executive Summary** (~1/2 page, on a separate page)
- **Introduction** (~1/2 page, begins on a new page)
- **Discussion** (5–7 pages, continuing from previous section)
 - Choose an organizational structure for this section from the [Sample Outlines & Content Prompts](#).
 - Use relevant and specific subheadings.
- **Conclusion** (~1/2 page, continuing from previous section)
- **Works Cited, References, or Bibliography** (as long as needed, on a separate page)
- **Appendices** (as long as needed, each begins on a separate page)

Additional Content Requirements

- **Definitions:** Provide internal definitions of concepts and terms as needed
- **Plain Language:** Use short sentences and other plain language techniques. Avoid jargon.

Objective Reporting Requirements

Your report should not draw conclusions, make recommendations, argue for one side or the other, or in any way take a position on the subject. It **MUST** remain as objective as you can possibly make it.

Its goal is to provide a response to the question “What is [your subject] all about and how does it contribute to and serve the community?”

This doesn't mean you can't present opinions about it, but those opinions must come from experts in the field. For example, Expert A thinks the subject of your article is a promising solution for increasing educational access, but Expert B questions its long-term sustainability or effectiveness. You can present these opposing viewpoints, but you must remain objective and let the reader make their own decision.

Success Tips

- **Use topic sentences** to keep your writing focused and easy to follow.
- **Chunk your ideas into short paragraphs** by knowing when to [start a new paragraph](#).
- **Draft visuals early**, so you can build your discussion around them, rather than squeezing them in later.
- **Check transitions.** Make sure each section flows smoothly into the next.

Optional AI Feedback

You can submit a draft to your preferred generative-AI tool (e.g., Copilot, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude) for feedback. If you do, you must follow the procedures outlined on the [Ethical AI Usage page](#), which include these rules:

- **Keep** the original draft untouched.
- **Use** a prompt that asks AI to review your draft and provide suggestions for improvement only. (No direct revisions)
- **Copy** the AI comments or revision advice below your original draft.
- **Briefly note** which tool you used and what prompt you gave it.
- **Copy and paste** your first draft below the AI comments and revise it based on the advice you have received.

Submission Details

If you did NOT use AI, submit ONE item by the deadline:

Upload the final version of the assignment on this page.

If you used AI, submit TWO items by the deadline:

- Upload the final version of the assignment on this page.
- Upload the AI-review file on this page as well.

How You'll Be Graded

Check the rubric on the assignment page for full assessment criteria.

Once I add feedback, you'll find comments in annotations on the document and in the rubric. Allow 3–4 days for me to add feedback.