

COMP09096 Creative Technologies Professionalism

Report Writing: Good and Bad Reports

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

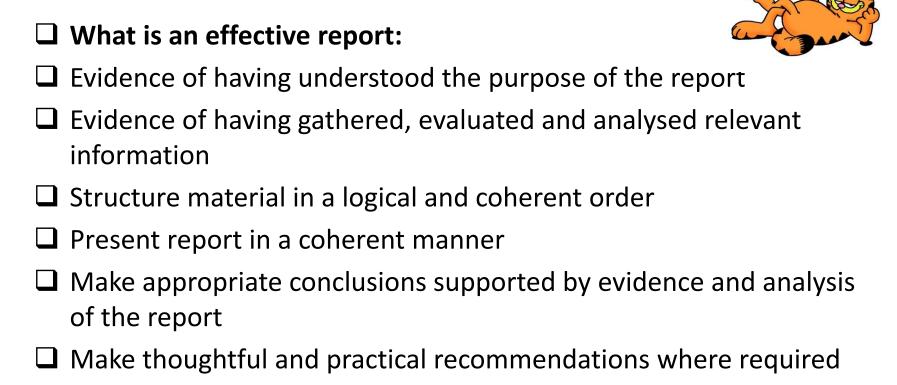
- ☐ What makes a good report
- ☐ What makes a bad report
- ☐ Examples of good and bad reports
- ☐ How to succeed with your report



PURPOSE OF REPORT WRITING

☐ Why write reports? Demonstrate and reinforce knowledge of a topic Important set of skills required for employment ■ What is a report? Written for a clear purpose and a certain audience Specific information and evidence are presented, analysed and applied to a particular problem or issue ☐ Information is presented in a clearly structured format Use of sections and headings to ensure the information is easy to locate and follow

WHAT MAKES A GOOD REPORT?



WHAT MAKES A BAD REPORT?

- ☐ What characteristics make a bad report:
 - ☐ Badly structured
 - ☐ Inappropriate writing style
 - Incorrect or inadequate referencing
 - ☐ Does not answer or address the topic
 - Too much/too little/irrelevant material
 - ☐ Expression not clear
 - Does not relate results to purpose
 - ☐ Unnecessary use of jargon



WHY WRITE A TECHNICAL REPORT? (1)

In industry technical reports are used to communicate technical information
Information in technical reports assist in decision making (e.g purchase of equipment; finding solutions to technical problems)
Important to consider the audience and purpose of the report:
☐ Brief managers
Provide technical background information for lay people associated with the project
Make recommendations to technical supervisors

WHY WRITE A TECHNICAL REPORT? (2)

In Higher Education technical report writing is a regularly used assignment format (e.g. engineering, IT, applied sciences)
Students sometimes required to bring theory and real world situations together
Present and convey information in a structured and presentable format
Present information for a specific audience
Engineering students might be asked to solve a design problem
IT students might be asked to develop an information management plan for a specific issue or company
Evaluate recent developments in a certain industry
Learning how to report on technical information to others is an important component of technical studies

TYPICAL STRUCTURE OF A REPORT

☐ Typical structure of a technical report: ☐ Title Page ☐ Abstract (Executive Summary) ☐ Table of Contents ☐ Introduction ☐ Main Body ■ Analysis ☐ Conclusion ☐ Reference List ☐ Appendix



TITLE AND CONTENTS PAGES

□ Title pages and content pages allow readers to know who is responsible for the document and allow them to find information easily
 □ Useful for long reports such as projects or dissertations
 □ Title page clearly shows your name, your report title, date the report was completed
 □ Contents page is an outline of the structure of your report illustrating the headings of each section and the pages they start on

ABSTRACT OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concise summary of your whole report
Assists readers decide whether they want to read the whole report – acts as 'shop window'
Abstract is sometimes the only part of the report that people read
Abstracts are most commonly found in research reports
Provide an overview of the key aims, methods, findings and conclusions
Summarises the whole report (200 words or fewer; normally written as one paragraph)
Executive summary is more often found in business reports

INTRODUCTION

	There are two main purposes to an introduction:
1)	Introduces the context of your report – explains what you have been asked to investigate
2)	Analyses the background literature that relates to your investigation (previous research and work in the area)
	Introductions also do the following:
	☐ Provide a description main aims, objectives and scope of the report
	☐ State an overview of the report's sections and their relationship to your investigation
	Explain terminology (if required)
	☐ Indicate methods of report
	Mention the limitations of the study
	Outline material presented in the rest of the report

MAIN BODY OF REPORT

Usually the longest part of the report
Expands and develops material in a logical a coherent manner
Reflects the structure outlined in the introduction
Contains a description of the findings and a discussion of them
Must be presented logically to ensure it is easy to read
Use of headings to organise the information in the report and make it logical
Sometimes includes discussion or analysis section though this can be added as a separate section

ANALYSIS

- Provides a discussion of the literature presented in the report
 Weighs up the findings from identified studies
 Compares and contrasts the evidence
 Reviews what has been addressed in the report so far
- ☐ Assists to inform the conclusions and recommendations

CONCLUSION

Summarises the major inferences that can be drawn by the information presented in the report
Answers questions raised by the original research problem o purpose of the report
States conclusions reached
Illustrates 'what it all means'
Significance of the findings and their impact
Lets readers know why your findings are important
Conclusions must be formed from the evidence discussed in the main body of the report
Includes suggestions for further research
'take-away' message for readers

REFERENCE LIST

- ☐ List of all the references cited in the text of your report
- ☐ Listed in alphabetical order at the end of the report
- ☐ Good idea to compile your reference list as you write your report so you can keep track of all your sources



APPENDIX

Presented last in your report
Contain additional information that is useful for your reader
Information that supports your analysis and conclusions (e.g figures, tables, graphs, charts, statistics, questionnaires, drawings, pictures)
Each item in the appendices requires to have been selected and have a purpose – not viewed as a 'dumping ground'
No limit to what is placed in the appendix as long as it is relevant and reference is made to it in the report
Information in the appendix must relate directly to the purpose of the report
Each separate appendix should be lettered: Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix B1, Appendix B2, Appendix C