

CHAPTER SIX: WRITING REPORTS OF VARIOUS TYPES

Definition: it is the practical writing that people do as part of their jobs. Be in any position, people generate documents as part of their responsibilities. Some documents are brief (a memo is one page long); other documents are lengthy.

Purpose of Report Writing: Report writing has three main purposes: to inform, to instruct and to persuade.

- To inform is its main purpose. Thus, people must supply or receive information constantly to carry out their functions in the workplace.
- When we say that report writing instructs, writers give readers directions for using equipment and for performing duties. For instance, some one must tell consumers how to use their new purchase, whether it is a radio or a computer.
- It also persuades- on the job, people must persuade others to do certain things.

Characteristics of report writing: - it focuses on the following points:

- **Specific audience:** report writing engages a specific audience. The workers who must attend a meeting receive memo that announces it. The executive who must choose between two alternatives receives the feasibility report that explains them. Knowing this, good report writers always generate documents whose goal is to address the needs of specific readers.
- **Objective Language:** report writing is framed in plain, objective language and uses terminology the audience understands. Because its purpose is to inform, instruct, or persuade a reader about a specific practical matter, report writing focuses on the reader's attention on the relevant facts.
- **Presentational organization:** presentational writing employs a device that enables readers to assimilate information at a glance. Good report writers make the structure of the document obvious and make the format of the document easy to scan.
- **Visual Aids:** Report writing communicates visually with graphs, tables, and drawings. Other types of writing- essays, novels, poems seldom use visual aid to communicate; news papers sometimes use visual aids in their analytical articles. But, visual aids appear regularly in report writing. Documents that explain experiments or projects almost always include tables or graphs.

Task: give your reason for the following question first in pairs then in group of six.

1. Why are visual aids the characteristics of report writing?
2. Presentational organization is the characteristics of report writing. Why?

Types of Report Writing

In writing, a **report** is a document characterized by information or other content reflective of inquiry or investigation, which is tailored to the context of a given situation and audience. The purpose of reports is usually to inform. However, reports may include persuasive elements, such as recommendations, suggestions, or other motivating conclusions that indicate possible future actions the report reader might take. Reports can be public or private, and often address questions posed by individuals in government, business, education, and science. Reports often take the structure of scientific investigation: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (IMRAD). They may sometimes follow a problem-solution structure based on the audience's questions or concerns. As for format, reports range from a simpler format with headings to indicate topics, to more complex formats including charts, tables, figures, pictures, tables of contents, abstracts, summaries, appendices, footnotes, hyperlinks, and references.

The purpose of a report is to show information collected to the reader about certain topics, usually to set targets or to show a general view on the subject in hand. Another purpose is to discuss and analyze ideas and thoughts on any problems or improvements to be made and to inform the audience. They can either persuade, suggest or to motivate conclusions.

A report is an extended formal document with lots of pages that shows different types of information with details of the findings like e.g. Methodology, findings and added Appendices. The document structure is easily navigated by using a table of contents, so the audience can easily find specific information by clear headings and a set structure of text and images. Good report writing call for--- professionalism, profound knowledge of the subject, attentiveness, and outstanding writing proficiency.

The major types of Report Writing, include research report writing, business report writing, and science report Writing.

Research Report Writing

To presents the tangible proof of the conducted research is the major intention of the academic assignment. When writing on research report, you must ponder over clarity, organization, and content. Research reports are all the more same to technical reports, lab reports, formal reports and scientific papers which comprise a quite consistent format that will facilitate you to put your information noticeably, making it crystal clear. This type of report is going to be discussed in detail later.

Business Report Writing

In business milieu, Business report writing happens to be an indispensable part of the communication process. Executive summary is written in a non-technical manner. By and large, audience for business reports will consist of upper level manager, for that reason you should take the audience needs in consideration. Go on with the introduction to articulate the problem and determine the scope of the research. To attain the desired results, don't fail to state about the precise quantitative tools.

Science Report Writing

Parallel to a business report, science report writing also corresponds with the line of investigation. To report upon an empirical investigation, these reports make use of standard scientific report format, portraying technique, fallout and conclusions. As an assignment in undergraduate papers within the scientific disciplines, it is required frequently.

The main objective of the Science report is to boast an aim, the technique which enlightens how the project has been analyzed, the outcomes which presents the findings and the conclusion. This embraces advance research suggestions and your own biased opinion on the topic which has been talked about.

When writing a science report, do not fail to remember to use heading and subheadings in order to direct a reader through your work. In the form of tables and graphs, Statistical

evidence should be incorporated in appendices. Then refer to it in the body of your scientific report.

Reports are a common form of writing because of the inclusion of recommendations which are helpful in implementing the decision. Successful report writing, just like any other academic writing assignment, requires:

- professionalism
- in-depth knowledge of the subject discussed
- concentration exceptional writing skills

Considerations in Preparing Reports

Presenting information effectively in reports: the “language” and “style” filter *As you choose words,*

- Use words that are accurate, appropriate, familiar and business-like
- Avoid slang (“awesome”, “going postal”) or contractions (“can’t”)
- *Generally*, use a fairly formal style for longer, formal report (Note that in most formal reports, the 3rd person is generally used—consider your audience for determining appropriateness of “I”, and “we”. Note that if you use “you”, and there are multiple audiences, it will not be clear who “you” is.)
- Use technical jargon only when it is essential and known to the reader (FIFO and LIFO are technical terms known to accountants but maybe not to computer people. However, when writing a cover letter, it’s desirable to use technical terminology to show you are competent in that field. Audience analysis determines the appropriateness.)

As you write and revise sentences,

- Use active (vs. passive) voice *most* of the time
- Use appropriate verb tense (the present vs. past tense decision)
- Use strong verbs—not nouns—to carry the weight of your sentence (“we will perform an investigation of the problem” is weaker than “we will investigate the problem”)

- Be concise—tighten your writing (“the reason we are recommending the computerization of this process is because it will reduce the time required to obtain data and will give us more accurate data” is wordy—“computerizing the process will give us more accurate data more quickly” is tighter)
- Say what you mean (“My report revolves around the checkout lines and the methods used to get price checks when they arise” is vague, but “my report shows how price checks slow checkout lines and recommends ways to reduce the number of price checks” is better, “The first problem with the incentive program is that middle managers do not use good interpersonal skills in implementing it. For example, the hotel chef openly ridicules the program”, is incorrect, whereas, “The first problem with the incentive program is that some middle managers undercut it. For example, the hotel chef openly ridicules the program” is better
- Use parallel structure (“errors can be checked by reviewing the daily report or note the number of errors you uncover when you match the lading copy with the file copy of the invoice” is not parallel structure—“errors can be checked by reviewing the daily report or by noting the number of errors...” is parallel)
- Use correct grammar (“An accountant must pass a difficult test before they can become a CPA”)

As you write and revise paragraphs

- Begin most paragraphs with topic sentences (“Plan B also has some advantages” prepares the reader for a discussion of B’s advantages)
- Use transitions to link ideas (“additionally”, “in summary”...)

Creating a visually appealing report: the “visual” filter

As you use visuals

- Consider if understanding, interest and recall can be enhanced by using a table, chart or other visual
- Be descriptive in your labels and titles

- Introduce visuals (“Note in Figure 1 how Microsoft has the biggest market share of sales in the software industry”)

As you plan the physical design of the document

- Use appropriate spacing (single or double) and left/right margin justification
- Consider a highly readable typeface such as Times New Roman/Arial/Helvetica
- Use white space to separate and emphasize points
- Use lists, bullets to emphasize material, as appropriate
- Use headings to group points (*Attention to:* being consistent in placement, being descriptive in phrasing, using the same grammatical structure—compare the following:

These headings are not parallel:

Are students aware of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Current Awareness among Undergraduate Students

Graduate Students

These are parallel:

Campus Awareness of COVID-19

Current Awareness among Undergraduate Students

Current Awareness among Graduate Students