

ENG 238

TECHNICAL WRITING & WRITING REPORTS

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INFORMATIONAL

REPORTS

“Describe something that has happened or is happening now”

INFORMATIONAL

REPORTS

Clear, accurate & specific
information to an...

AUDIENCE

INFORMATIONAL REPORTS

Analyze the project, problem, or situation

...an explanation of *why* or *how*

RECOMMENDATION REPORTS

are a type of informational report

but they go further: offer suggestions about what to do next.

RECOMMENDATION

REPORTS

What should we do about X?

Should we do X action?

Should we use Tool A or Tool B to do X?

This is what we do now. Should we do it this way instead?

RECOMMENDATION

REPORTS

Usually the final document in a chain of documents

Proposal

Progress Reports

Final report / Project Report / Recommendation Report

RECOMMENDATION

REPORTS

But they can also be freestanding documents

(Our reports will not be)

In either case, we are interested in *feasibility*

“a measure of the practicality of a course of action”

RECOMMENDATION

REPORTS

A Feasibility Report answers...

Possibility

Financial practicality

How the action will be perceived

PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Follow the normal writing process

THE TECHNICAL WRITING PROCESS

These steps should be used to guide you through your writing. It does not need to be a linear process, but you should complete each step while keeping an eye on time.



Planning

Think about your audience (who they are, why are they reading your document), and why you're creating this document. Brainstorm and start planning a task schedule.



Drafting

Create your draft by looking at appropriate examples. Keep your document clear and consistent. Start with the easiest topics first.



Revising

Read your document completely. Does it make sense for your audience? Is there any missing information? Is the document complete? Consult peers if needed.



Editing

Read your document aloud. Does it sound correct? Check your grammar, style, usage, diction, and mechanics. Have someone else read it aloud.



Proofreading

Read your document again. Check to make sure you typed what you meant to say. Don't rely on spell check.

PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

Identify the Problem or Opportunity

Establish Criteria for Responding to It

Determine the Options

Study Each Option According to Criteria

Draw Conclusions about Each Option

Formulate Recommendation

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Write a clear statement

THAT MEANS A COMPLETE, CONCISE SENTENCE
OR TWO

Consider Feasibility

Research the possible

So you can identify the real and practical problem

ESTABLISH CRITERIA

“standards against which you measure options”

Either *necessary* or *desirable*

Necessary: what must happen or be the case (e.g. a maximum cost)

Desirable: what you want, but don't need

Sometimes these are given by a superior, but sometimes these are discovered in research

DETERMINE OPTIONS

“potential courses of action you can take”

Simple or complicated

Research can lead to more options or questions to consider

Expect your understanding of options to change as you do research

BUT YOUR PROBLEM SHOULD GENERATE OPTIONS

STUDY EACH OPTION

Study each one

Research

Make a *decision matrix*, if warranted

A table or spreadsheet that rates criteria or outlines a decision-making process (think yes / no and “if yes, then”)

Must explain your methods for your decisions: why criteria, why you weighted them, why the rating

DRAW CONCLUSIONS

Write evaluation statements

THIS MEANS COMPLETE, CONCISE SENTENCES

You might rank options for your reader

You might categorize as acceptable or unacceptable

You might present a compound or qualified conclusion
(e.g. most features versus best value)

MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

Use your best judgment

Consider if circumstances, such as funds, have changed

Be persuasive but honest

Account for a change in the problem or opportunity

Write concise, clear sentences

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