

TECHNICAL WRITING & WRITING REPORTS, Pt 2

2 April 2018

PREPARED BY PROFESSOR JORDAN WINDHOLZ

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

3 Sections

Front Matter

Body

Back Matter

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Front Matter

Orient readers to subject

Summarize for technical readers

Help readers navigate report

Help readers decide if they should read further

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Front Matter

(Letter of Transmittal)

Cover

Title Page

Abstract

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

(Executive Summary)

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Body

Provide a comprehensive account of the project

From problem or opportunity

To Methods

And most Important Findings

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Body

Introduction

Methods

Results

Conclusions

Recommendations

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Back Matter

Present supplementary material

Detailed explanations for readers

Enable readers to consult secondary sources

WRITING RECOMMENDATION REPORTS: THE BASICS

Back Matter

Glossary

(List of Symbols)

References

Appendixes

The Body: Where To Begin

Where you draft your ideas

Introduction

Methods

Results

Conclusions

Recommendations

The Body: Introduction

Help Readers Understand

What is the **subject** of the report?

Reuse proposal materials as necessary

What is the **purpose** of the *report* (not the project)?

What is the **background** of the report?

What are your **sources** of information?

The Body: Introduction

What is the **scope** of the report? (what you are including and what you are not)

What are the **most significant findings**?

What are your **recommendations**?

What is the **organization** of the report?

What **key terms** are you using in your report?

The Body: Methods

Answers

What did you do?

*Why you did it **that way**?*

You need reasons

Consider what readers already know

Consider what readers need to know

The Body: Results

Answers

What did you observe or determine?

Data you compiled

Be objective

Save interpretation for conclusions

Details and evaluations

The Body: Conclusions

Answers

What does it mean?

What the results lead to

Do your results point to a clear meaning?

The Body: Recommendations

Answers

What should we do?

From results, to conclusions, to recommendations

BUT recommendations do not always follow directly from conclusions

You may recommend no action be taken, or action be delayed to a later time

Front Matter: Letter of Transmittal

Form of letter or memo

Introduces purpose and content of report

States who authorized the report

Acknowledges assistance

First thing reader sees

Courteous and professional tone

Front Matter: Cover

Title of the report

Name and position of writer

Date of submission

Name or logo of writer's company

Any proprietary information

Front Matter: Title Page

Title of the report

Name of writer

Date of submission

Project number (in bigger organizations)

Additional personnel

Distribution list

Front Matter: Abstract

A brief technical summary of the report

No more than 200 words

For readers in the know

You can use technical terms

Use keywords

Descriptive or Informative (sometimes combined)

What it contains versus results

Front Matter: Table of Contents

Most important guide to navigating report

Two functions

- To help readers find information they want

- To help understand scope and organization

Use same headings and style as the report itself

Sections no more than 5-6 pages

Feel free to use subheadings

Front Matter: List of Illustrations

A table of contents for the figures

Follows the table of contents

May be on a different page

Or it can be on the same page

Front Matter: Executive Summary

Brief summary addressed to managers

Broad, not specific

One page (double-spaced) or 5 percent of report

Background

Problem or opportunity

Major findings and implications

Brief description of methods, paragraph of conclusions and recommendations

Back Matter: Glossary

An alphabetical list of definitions

Reader's aid

Technical vocabulary

In your report, use **boldface** or *italics* to indicate words in glossary

Use a footnote at the first instance to inform readers of this method

Back Matter: References

Or *Bibliography* or *List of Works Cited*

Together with citations in report, called the *documentation*

Shows your debts

Establishes credibility and authority

Helps readers who want to know more

Back Matter: Appendixes

An section that follows the body of the report, the glossary, and references.

Sometimes called *appendices*

Any extra information that bloats the report

Maps, complicated diagrams, charts, data

Use letters and not numbers (Appendix A, not 1)

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

BE COMFORTABLE BEING LOST

It doesn't come together until it does

The writing is the work

Consult the sample report in the book, 360-383