

REPORTS

There are different kinds of reports (distinguishing between them usually involves looking at their length):

Short reports usually are provided for in-house (internal) communication, while the long reports are used for a wide range of purposes (being either internal or external).

Short Reports take the form of memos and letters, which are divided into sections (usually with headings).

The Booklet report (the long form) resembles a “short term paper” and contains different sections (with headings). The booklet is usually accompanied by a memo (for internal use) or letter (for external use).

These reports typically contain visuals. Sometimes, even memo-length reports contain visuals (e.g. charts/graphics, etc.).

As you probably suspected, there are different types of reports:

You can divide reports into two categories
Reports That Document Work & Reports That Guide Decisions

Reports That Document Work, include:

- Annual Reports
- Laboratory Reports
- Medical Reports
- Progress Reports
- Sales Reports
- Travel Reports

Reports That Guide Decisions, include:

- Feasibility Studies
- Personnel Reports
- Preliminary Task Analysis Reports
- Research Reports
- Incident Reports
- Progress Reports
- Travel Reports

ORGANIZATION

As with the different types, there are different forms and methods of organization. For example, consider the following components of each:

- Incident Report
 - Description of the Incident

Recommendations

Progress Report

Introduction

Work [Completed]

Work [Remaining]

Challenges/Problems

Conclusion/Recommendations

Travel Report

Introduction

Description of Activities Associated with Travel

Cost Accounting

Discussion

Scientific Report

Introduction

Experimental Section

Results

Discussion

Conclusion

Recommendations

Appendices

COMPONENTS

Consider this list as the best “universal” list of components (since all reports will be different, based on their individual purposes):

Cover Page (with Title, Names, and Dates)

Letter of Transmittal (if needed)

Executive Summary

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables (if necessary)

The Report

Introduction

Body

Conclusions

Recommendations

Notes

Appendix

Glossary

Bibliography

Index

SUGGESTIONS

Have a memo or letter to introduce the material

Include a title page (with the title of the report the name of the author/s, the name of the company, and the date)

Separate into clearly labeled sections.

Use clear, simple language

Employ effective visuals

Use figure numbers for visuals

Try to make sure to avoid having any errors in your text.

Use decimal numbering, even for headings

Traditionally, numbering pages you have two options:

Sequential (1-100)

-or-

Begin each section/chapter on page one (1-1, 1-2, 1-3, 2-1, 2-2, 2-3).

Furthermore, in terms of conclusions/recommendations, reports can be In-Direct (or Back-Loaded) or Direct (or Front-Loaded)

Front-Loaded means all of the problems/concerns/issues are addressed upfront, along with methods, and plans of development/implementation.

Back-Loaded means all of the problems/concerns/issues are addressed behind the plans of development/implementation.

Fully-Loaded means that the information is disbursed as needed throughout the report.