



The Conventions of Report-Writing

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EVROPSKÁ UNIE



MINISTERSTVO ŠKOLSTVÍ,
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OP Vzdělávání
pro konkurenceschopnost



INVESTICE
DO ROZVOJE
VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Academic Writing – Different Genres

Essay or Report, or Both?

- Typical in the field of work
- Often includes a glossary
- Contains reference to self-collected research/data
- Divided into sections with internal headings
- Can contain tables, diagrams, appendices
- Often contains a mixture of writing styles & quotes
- Includes recommendations
- A continuous flow of writing (i.e. no/limited sections)
- Employs hedging language to make cautious claims
- Is always accompanied by a Reference List

Case Studies: True or False?

Irrespective of the discipline, Case Studies can be very effective in developing academic skills...

- ...test ability to apply knowledge of theories & models
- ...enable assessment of critical thinking skills
- ...end product is a case study report
- ...require data on company in case to be updated
- ...contain irrelevant, incomplete, messy, complex & multi-dimensional data
- ...need data to be assimilated & chunked before analysis begins
- ...always have correct answers following analysis

Managing Case Data

- Read the case several times & with a different analytical purpose (highlight/underline/annotate on the second or third reading)
- Before analysis, assimilate information into groups
- Do not attempt to find missing information; work with the data given (theories/models can be explored)
- Ensure analysis is transparent & rigorous
- Present results/findings in logical order
- NB: Quality of arguments is more important than 'correctness' of conclusions

Reports: Main Features

[Adapted from Hedges, P. D. (1999)]

- Title Page

For example...

Reports: Main Features

[Adapted from Hedges, P. D. (1999)]

QUANTITATIVE APPRAISAL OF STORM OVERFLOW OPERATION THE HYDRODYNAMIC SEPARATOR

Dr P.D. Hedges and P.E. Lockley

Department of Civil Engineering
Aston University
Birmingham, U.K.

Report Prepared For:

Severn Trent Water Plc
2297 High Street
Harborne
Birmingham

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Reports: Main Features

[Adapted from Hedges, P. D. (1999)]

- Abstract; Executive Summary; Resume; Synopsis; Problem Statement; Terms of Reference...

What's the difference between each of the above?

- List of Contents/Tables/Illustrations (if applicable)
- Glossary &/or notation employed
- Introduction/Background/Case History
- Main text [the detailed report, in sections]
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Reference List (if applicable)
- Appendices/drawings (if applicable)

Report-Writing: Some hints...

- Work from the General to Specific ▼ ...
- Clearly state objectives (Who? What? Why?)
- Outline scope and limitations of the investigation
- Start main section with: history/facts/observations > then move to > theories/interpretations/deductions
- Provide relevant, concise, complete details
- Ensure information given is accurate, with valid reasoning based upon facts
- Present logical analysis and classification of material...
- Employ figures, tables, drawings & sketches to add clarity to difficult descriptions (if applicable)
- Explicitly draw the reader's attention to any illustrations
- Ensure **text** is main vehicle of information transfer

Report-Writing: Some hints...

- Use clear presentation & structure – with internal headings, numbering & appropriate layout
- Ensure the report is intelligible, i.e.: easy to read, follow & understand
- Give recommendations/identify good practice
- Fulfil the purpose of the report

Headings

Report Headings are an aid; they should

- allow readers to locate information at a glance
- consist of words or phrases – not sentences
- be precise and concise
- be self-explanatory

Before writing a report, students should ask the following:

- What does the reader of the report already know about the subject?
(to avoid repetition)
- What does the reader want to know?
(to ensure the expectations of the reader are met)
- What do I want the reader to know about this subject?
(to meet personal aims and objectives for the report)
- What action will the reader want to take as a result of reading the report?
(to create a clear purpose for writing: i.e.: To inform? persuade? To provide an action plan...?)

Schematic Report - Shell

- Handout 2 provides a 'shell' for the schematic report format. Compare your section-headings with those given here.
- Work with a partner to complete the report. Pay attention to your style of writing; make each section as succinct as possible...
- Class Feedback...
- *Now compare your writing with that in the completed report...(Handout 3)*

The Dos of Report Writing

- ...begin by stating the purpose of your report
- ...use simple, clear headings & sub-headings
- ...write in the passive form (avoiding first person)
- ...use a range of grammatical structures
- ...succinctly summarise section information
- ...provide recommendations at end, if relevant
- ...use footnotes for additional information, if needed
- ...include tables &/or appendices, if necessary
- ...acknowledge any sources cited in/directly & provide a corresponding Reference List
- **Layout:** Justify the text, paginate the report, leave spaces between paragraphs/sections

The Don'ts of Report Writing

- ...repeat information
- ...use exaggerated or emotive language
- ...write in a discursive style
- ...present report as one long text
- ...write in multi-clause sentences
- ...use excessive, subjective/personal language

[NB: opinions can be indicated through use of modal verbs, expressions of probability/possibility, connectors, and any reporting verbs, where relevant]

- ...be vague
- ...make the report longer than is necessary...



Inovace jazykového vzdělávání

Thank you for your attention.

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Slideshow: Hasan Shikoh 2012
Music: GustlerX (Youtube 2009)