

FORMAL REPORTS FORMATTING AND WRITING THE FORMAL REPORT

FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS

For formatting guidelines for the formal report, read Business Communication, chapter 12 and the material in Nelson's Study Notes under chapter 12 (particularly, Formatting Guidelines for the Formal Report). When there are differing formatting guidelines between Business Communication and Nelson, use the Nelson guidelines. For example, Business Communication provides different heading format instruction than Nelson---use Nelson.

BASIC WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

Now you are ready to apply instruction by writing the long report. Basic writing instructions follow:

Writing style	Use formal, personal (omit casual language) writing style. See Business Communication pages 50-51 to review personal/impersonal writing styles.
Number of Pages	Write at least 15 pages from introduction through recommendations.
Graphic aids	Include at least 2 graphic aids using the formal presentation style: (1) 1 pie or bar chart, (2) 1 table.
References	Cite at least 10 secondary sources in the text and on a References page using the APA style of referencing. The references are to be dated 1998 or after. You must give credit to references.

Start the writing process with the body (or message) section and then write the supplementary and preliminary parts. Detailed information for writing each section follows, and the report should be written in the order discussed here.

BODY SECTION

Introduction or Overview

The Overview (or Introduction) is the first section of the body of the report. The content of the overview or the introduction of a formal report is more developed than that of a short, informal report. To help you learn how to approach this type of introduction, I am providing a discussion of each part of the overview. Use the heading OVERVIEW for this section formatted as a first-degree heading (Review Report Headings under chapter 8 of Nelson's Study Notes), and do not include other headings in this section. The Overview section should be about two pages (doubled spaced) in length.

Background

(Business Communication, page 177)

The first item in the Overview is a discussion of the background of the problem. In a formal report, the writer spends some time "setting the stage" for the reader---a full discussion of the larger picture of the problem or topic provided the audience needs such a discussion. In this discussion, include information concerning the historical development of the topic or what happened previously about the topic or problem. Bring the discussion down to your company or situation from the historical or global view. For your assignment in ASBE 336, write at least two (but no more than three) paragraphs of background information and include reference citations if applicable. Avoid including information in the background portion of the report that you will want to use later in the discussion of factors. Do not include a separate heading for the background.