

Formatting & Developing Short Business Reports

Please notice the parts and format of a short business report. Note that short reports are transmitted either via a business letter (if for an external audience) or memorandum (for internal communication). Therefore, the first page of the report will begin either following the letterhead, inside address and salutation of a letter or the headings of a memorandum.

Short Report Tipsheet

Since short reports are transmitted formal business communications, they should be written in block style with every line beginning flush with the left margin. The report itself begins a double space below either the letterhead, inside address and salutation of a letter **OR** the headings of a memorandum. You should single space within the paragraphs of your report but double space between paragraphs. According to APA, the title of your report should be **centered, boldface, uppercase and lowercase**. Main section headings are **left aligned, bold, heading style upper and lowercase**, should contain meaningful language that identifies the topic of the section. Subsection headings are **indented, boldface, lowercase followed by a period**; begin body text after the period. Use a double space above and below the section headings of a report; do not use any other “special” spacing around the headings. Headings are usually noun phrases although they can be participial phrases, statements, or questions. Whatever structure you use must remain consistent throughout the report (parallelism).

Report Sections

Begin the report with an introductory statement that clearly states the subject, reason (who requested) and purpose of the report. This statement (which may likely be more than a single sentence) should also address the problem and issues (if a problem exists), provide a statement of results, and a layout of the report (most likely an identification and perhaps explanation of the report sections).

You must double space after the opening statement (opening statements **DO NOT** have section headings) to begin your first report section. The report should present objectively, without emotional appeals, all pertinent facts—both favorable and unfavorable. Sources and methods should be mentioned along with emphasis on findings or results.

Following the last section should be a final paragraph that brings the report to a pleasant, friendly close. Recommendations and conclusions, if necessary, should be a part (section) of the body of the report, not the final paragraph.

A letter report will, of course, have a signature block following the final statement of the report.