**General Format**

Technical Reports have an organized format because a majority of your audience may not read the entire report in one reading. This specific format allows readers to quickly locate the information they need.

Most technical reports include the parts listed below. However, you may be required to include or exclude specific sections. Be sure to check with your instructor before using the format outlined here.

**Transmittal Letter**

Transmittal letters often accompany reports and inform readers of a report's context. Typically, the letter includes information not found in the report. For example, the letter contains information about the particular project and/or due dates. A Transmittal Letter is a business letter and should be formatted accordingly; that is, you should include the recipient's address, your address, a salutation and closing. Depending on the project, you may also need to include contact information. Always check with your instructor to determine whether or not you should attach a transmittal letter to your report.

**Title Page**

A technical report should always include a title clearly identifying the report. A title should be descriptive and accurate, but not wordy, verbose or too terse.

**Abstract**

The Abstract is extremely important because it helps readers decide what to read and what to pass over. The idea of the Abstract is to give readers an honest evaluation of the report's content, so they can quickly judge whether they should spend their valuable time reading the entire report. This section should give a true, brief description of the report's content. The most important purpose of the Abstract is to allow somebody to get a quick picture of the report's content and make a judgment.

Since an Abstract is a brief summary of your report, its length corresponds with the report's length. So, for example, if your report is eight pages long, you shouldn't use more than 150 words in the Abstract. Generally, Abstracts define the report's purpose and content.

**Executive Summary**

Typically, Executive Summaries are written for readers who do not have time to read the entire technical report. An executive summary is usually no longer than 10% of the report. It can be anywhere from 1-10 pages long, depending on the report's length. In the executive summary, you should summarize the key points and conclusions from your report. You might include anexecutive summary with your report, or the summary can be a separate document.

Some reports only include an abstract while others include an executive summary. Always check with your instructor to determine which to include or if you should include both.

**Table of Contents**

A Table of Contents includes all the headings and subheadings in your report and the page numbers where each of these begins. When you create a Table of Contents, one of the most important decisions you have to make involves design. A good Table of Contents distinguishes headings from subheadings and aligns these with the appropriate page numbers. This also means you should pay attention to capitalization, spacing, and indentation.

**List of Figures & List of Tables**

These two separate lists assist readers in locating your photos, drawings, tables, graphs and charts. Like the Table of Contents, you need to present both of these in an organized, appealing format. Typically, you can shorten a figure or table's title when you create these lists.

**Report Body**

In a technical report, the body typically presents an Introduction, various other sections, depending on your topic, and a Conclusion. Throughout the body, you should include text (both your own and research from other sources), graphics, and lists. Whenever you cite information or use graphics from another source, you must credit these sources within your text. Check with your instructor to know which reference style to use.

**References**

Whenever you cite information (this includes graphics) from another source, you must credit the source in your References. Always check with your instructor to determine which reference style to use.

**Appendices**

Appendices include information that is too large to fit within your report, yet information necessary to your report. For example, large graphics, computer print-outs, maps, or sample codes are best placed in Appendices. When making decisions about what to place in an Appendix, consider whether or not the material interrupts the reading flow. For instance, six pages of calculations would obviously cause readers to loose their train of thought. Appendices always appear at the end of a report.