

Putting together a multi-section report

Common elements of a multi-section report

- Abstract or executive summary
- Table of Contents and List of Tables and Figures
- Introduction
- Body of the report
 - Varies with report and/or discipline
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- Sources cited
- Appendices

Compose an informative abstract?

- One sentence for each of following:
 - Problem or question your project explored?
 - Technical significance?
 - Approach used to explore question?
 - Significant results?
 - Conclusion (s) in relation to problem or question?
- Abstracts are generally 200-250 words.
- Abstracts are single-spaced and contain no references.
- Written for an expert reader.

Compose an executive summary?

- Summarize the entire project or report.
 - Background
 - Significance
 - Substance of report
 - Conclusions and recommendations
 - Budget and schedule, if relevant
- Length depends on length of report but generally not more than a page, double-spaced.
- Contains no references and no graphics.
- Written for an intelligent but not expert reader.

Sections of multi-section document

- Remember that each section of the report offers content that has to be substantive, accurate and complete.
 - Think of the reader and his/her purpose in reading.
- Sections do not have to be written in the order that they appear in the report.
 - Write the abstract or executive summary when the document is finished.

Graphics in multi-section documents

- Keep a separate folder for graphics on computer hard drive and decide on consistent graphic dimensions and file formats.
 - This makes it easier for multiple writers to contribute to same document.
- Remember to label all graphics when they go into document.
- Review graphics to be sure that styles are consistent from section to section.
 - Proofread.

Appendices

- Appendices hold information that the reader may want to access but does not have to have in order to understand document.
- Appendices should be labeled and noted in the Table of Contents

Navigational devices

- Add formatting and navigational devices after the text is finished.
 - Remember page numbers, headings, sub-headings, title page with necessary information, citations.
 - Know required citation style or use software to support this. Use bibliographic notes developed in your research.

Revision and proofreading process

- Keep track of sections and the version of the substantive revision.
 - Develop a file naming protocol and a version control sheet.
- Allow enough time to take sections through enough substantive revisions.
 - If there were multiple writers contributing, allow time for one editor to smooth stylistic differences. Using a style sheet makes this task easier.
- In the final stage, copyedit for small sentence errors and then proofread.