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, subheadings, 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.