Report

Reports are designed to provide information or recommendations to an audience. Reports fall into two major categories: formal and informal. Formal reports require planning, researching, collaborating, and recommending and can take months to complete. Informal reports can be prepared quickly and presented in a less complicated format than a formal report.

1. **Purpose:** Why are you writing the report and what are your goals? Purpose will determine whether you will write a formal or informal report.

2. **Audience:** Who is going to read the report? Primary audience members are the decision makers and secondary audience members are the technical staff. Consider the following:
   A. Stakeholders: The people who are affected by the report.
   B. Context: The background information relevant to the audience and the report.
   C. Usability: The degree to which the document is usable for the audience.

3. **Professionalism:** Professionalism is communication through readability, which is determined by language and organization.
   A. Language: Your writing should be clear and concise.
      I. Writing conventions: You should practice correct usage, grammar, and punctuation.
      II. Logical flow: Your report should proceed in a logical fashion with developed, unified, and cohesive paragraphs.
      III. Perspective: "I" or "We"
      IV. Sentence structures: Active sentences are clearer and more accountable than passive constructions.
      V. Word choice: Avoid using clichés, slang, and offensive language.
      VI. Technical language: Adapt your language to your audience.
      VII. Style and tone: Use a professional tone and formal style.
   B. Organization: Your audience will have an expectation of form.
      I. Formatting: Follow the form that is used in your field or in your company.
      II. Highlighting techniques: Provide your audience with titles, headings, and subheadings.
      III. Bold and italics: Use for those words or phrases that require extra attention.
      IV. Transitions: Use for smooth movement from texts to figures, providing clear signals and identifying structures.
      V. Fonts: Use one font consistently.
      VI. Bullets: Use to organize large lists or large clauses.