

Checklist for Research Reports

Title Page, Table of Contents

- _____ Title page is visually appealing; white space and graphic elements are used wisely
- _____ All key information given (informative, interesting title; author; class / section; submitted to info; current date; anything else required)
- _____ Table of Contents lists 1st-, 2nd-, and sometimes 3rd-level headings as in text; page #s given
- _____ Separate “List of Tables and Figures” for visuals; appropriate listing and placement

Summary / Abstract

- _____ Brief (typically 100-150 words) summary of thesis and most relevant points of report, including conclusion(s), and recommendations where appropriate
- _____ Is not lifted wholesale from the larger report
- _____ On separate page, with heading
- _____ Could stand alone; no citations or need to reference report for understanding

Introduction

- _____ Clearly defines main focus of report (thesis), reason for research
- _____ Sufficient background information provided to situate readers, show “big picture”
- _____ Purpose / objectives of report are given
- _____ Audience is gracefully identified; significance of research to readers is provided
- _____ Scope of research provided: sub-topics, issues, etc.; limitations identified as appropriate
- _____ Sources and methodology information is gracefully worked into introductory material
- _____ Gives readers a sense of report’s structure

Body / Findings / Results and Discussion

- _____ Uses specific and useful headings / subheadings to guide readers through findings
- _____ Organizes information logically: builds from general to specific throughout and within each section; groups similar findings; avoids jumping around; uses transitions
- _____ Brief introductions in each section situate readers and set up scope of section
- _____ Discusses clearly and completely all important results; interpretation provided
- _____ Provides all necessary discussion and justification for later conclusions

Conclusions

- ___ Proceeds logically from previous results and discussion
- ___ Summarizes key information learned; no new information given here
- ___ Interprets for reader the overall significance of findings
- ___ Typically includes recommendations for readers or those involved with issues covered
- ___ Ends the report in a graceful and thoughtful manner

References

- ___ Lists bibliographic entries of works cited in report, in alphabetical order
- ___ Uses APA style appropriately for all entries
- ___ *Every* work cited in report is listed in “References” section; *every* bibliographic entry in “References” section is in report
- ___ In-text citations use correct format, include necessary information, are located appropriately

Figures and Tables

- ___ Introduced in text; inserted immediately where possible; discussed and interpreted
- ___ Visually appealing; all type is readable; graphics are clear; units, labels, and titles are clearly shown and appropriate; sufficient white space given above and below
- ___ Used in logical and useful manner: directly support discussion; no extraneous information
- ___ Visuals taken from or based on resources are appropriately cited, in text and in “References”

Format Information

- ___ Word-processed on 8.5” x 11” plain white paper; 1” margins on all sides; left justified only
- ___ Uses Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) for page numbers; title page is page 1, but is not numbered
- ___ Headings show clear distinction in hierarchy (1st greater than 2nd, and so on); logical spacing
- ___ Adheres to all suggested format and layout models given

Writing

- ___ Voice is the author’s paraphrase / summary, rather than sources’ wording
- ___ Style is graceful and clear; statements are accurate and precise; terms are defined
- ___ Wordiness and redundancy have been ruthlessly edited out; no needless words!
- ___ Uses active voice, but avoids excessive “I, I, I,” “you,” and casual / “chatty” phrasing
- ___ Mechanics are *perfect*: grammar (agreement, fragments, run-ons, etc.); punctuation (commas, semicolons, capitals, quotation marks, etc.); spelling (spell checkers are *not* sufficient!)