**Helpful Hints for Writing Reports**

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| Organization of Information  Language Used  Writing Mechanics  Relevance | * Present the facts and events in the sequential, chronological order that they occurred so the story is easier to understand. * Describe events in a way that shows a clear and logical relationship between them. * Use descriptive captions for the sections and subsections to reflect the flow of the information. * Use plain English – simple, common, active language. * Make every statement direct and concise. * Avoid abstract phrases that can confuse or mislead the reader. * Do not use a synonym merely to avoid repeating a word. Using the exact word may seem less interesting, but it will avoid misunderstanding. * Avoid sarcastic, emotional, or derogatory language. * Remember that readers do not need to be impressed; they need to be informed and persuaded. * Edit, edit, edit! * Realize that a poorly written or sloppy report can imply poor or sloppy investigative techniques. * Check for the proper use of commas, dashes, and other punctuation marks to accurately convey the writers’ meaning. * When using a pronoun, be sure the reader can clearly identify to whom or what it refers. * Check carefully for errors in spelling, word choice, or grammar, which can distract readers. * Use sentences that are fairly short, yet complete (subject, verb, and object). Fragments and long, drawn-out sentences can be confusing and misleading. * Keep paragraphs short. * Leave a space between paragraphs and use standard margins. * Don’t crowd too much onto the page. * Include only the information that will be needed by the reader. |