**Helpful Hints for Writing Reports**

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| Organization of InformationLanguage UsedWriting MechanicsRelevance | * 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.
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