



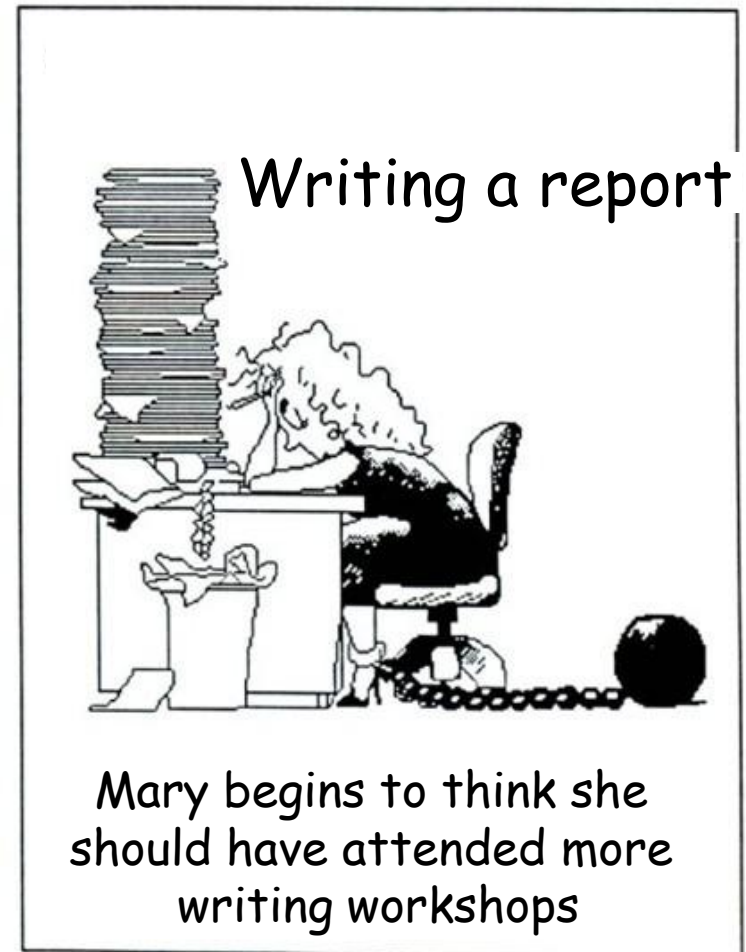
# Preparing a Written Report

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# Objectives

## To understand:

- Role of reports in the scientific process
- Steps in report preparation
- Some practical tips on report preparation and publication



# Who asks for Reports?

- Granting agency
- Government departments
- University departments, faculties
- Others- NGOs etc

# Why do you write a report?

To document your work progress and indicate what should be done next.

**The report is specific to who requested it.**

## **1. Granting Agency wants to know:**

- if money is well spent and
- if the program should be continued

# Reports and Papers differ

	Report	Paper
Why	Show activity	show discoveries
Focus	broad	narrow
Format	specific	specific
Length	++++	+
Copies	specified	N/A
Appendix	included	not usual
Deadline	rigid	open

# Getting Started



- Read the request for a report carefully: length, format, main questions to be answered.
- If possible, review a similar report
- Prepare the outline.
- **Never ever submit a sloppy report**

# Pitch to Audience



## Focus on their needs

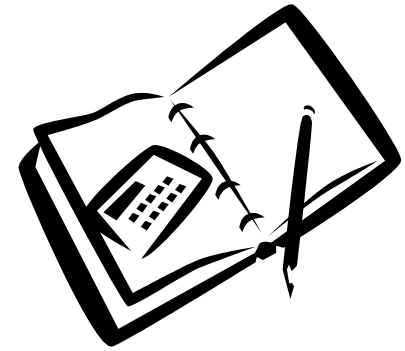
- sets language level (avoid jargon)
- determines length
- determines extent of data needed
- dictates style of report

# Typical Sections for a Report

1. Title page
2. Preface
3. Table of contents
4. **Executive summary**
5. Introduction & background
6. Chapters: each one will have one specific question, with its own methods, results and implications.
7. Overall Implications and next steps
8. Recommendations
9. Appendices
10. Index



# First Draft



- Preparing a report is a challenge; if you know early on that a report will be required – *get started early!*
- Collect material (eg appendices) at same time as you are working
- Don't worry about style and “word-smithing” in the first draft.

**Just do it! Tell your story !**

# Report: Introduction

## Indicate:

- What the problem is
- What do we know (and don't know)

## Clarify:

- what will be covered and
- what is not covered

Tailor this to meet the needs of the target audience for the report.

# Typical Report Chapter: Methods, Results, Implications

Hardest part to write but critical for policy makers and government.

## Overall

- Explain findings, comparing and contrasting to existing literature,
- discuss limitations of study,
- **Set the stage for recommendations at end of each chapter.**

# Typical Report Chapter: Methods, Results, Implications

Each chapter starts with an introduction:  
what question/topic will be covered

Followed by...

- Methods and results usually concise  
***not in detail of a paper***
- refer to your published articles and abstracts presented in the area
  - include article/ abstract in Appendix

# Report Chapter: Methods, Results, Implications

- Make the order of results logical.
- Be concise, include only–
  - Most important observations in text tables and graphs
  - Never repeat figures or tables with description in text
- Use the past tense
- Use appendices for more data, copies of your pertinent papers and abstracts

# Report Chapter: Methods, Results, Implications

Each chapter ends with implications and references:

- Implications: second to last component of each chapter and may include recommendations section.
- References usually are included in each chapter – not all at end of report.

# Subsequent Chapters of Report

- Do not repeat- but may refer back to other chapters.
- Make sure each chapter addresses only component stated in its introduction
- Recommendations should be number by chapter:
  - Chapter 1- Recommendation 1.1 ,1.2 etc

# Overall Implications Chapter

- The next-to-last section
- A brief summary of importance of work to date, how this could be “translated” and what next steps maybe
- **Must be specific to purpose of the report** –i.e. very different if government vs granting agency, vs university, vs NGO.



# Compile Recommendations: Last Chapter

- All recommendations from previous chapters should be collected into a chapter at the end.
- Ensure that “number” is a quick way to find data to support the recommendation
- Eg. Recommendation 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 etc

# Copyediting Revisions

In detailed editing (copyediting), check

- spelling and grammar
- double-check facts and figures.
- Check references to be sure they are accurate and make sure the appendices contain all relevant materials referred to in the main report.
- Be sure you follow “report instructions” everywhere.

# Finishing Touches-1

- Write the **preface**

Acknowledge who did the work, who funded it, when it was done, the time frame etc

- Write the **executive summary**

Key section; always written last!!!

Most read section

– ensure has your major points

– usually 1 to 3 pages;

rarely ever more than 6.

# Finishing Touches-2

- Write **title page** with authors, funders and to whom this report is directed
- Your title should be a concise and specific “label” for its contents. (Usually 6 to 12 words)
- For ideas, read titles of other reports



# Some additional Reading

- Canadian Health Services Research Foundation: The CHSRF has offers tools and aids for report writers, decision makers, policy makers etc.  
<http://www.chsrf.ca>
- Knowledge transfer aids for researchers:  
<http://www.ktp.utoronto.ca>