CHAPTER 9
Writing Reports

9.1 Planning Reports
9.2 Writing Informal Reports
9.3 Writing Formal Reports
Luigi Rossi owns a profitable business—Rossi’s Property Management. Business is strong, but it requires Luigi and his staff to work long, hard hours. The work is mentally stressful. The company manages the construction of building projects. It also manages the day-to-day operations of large and small apartment complexes.

Many of Luigi’s clients are retired businesspeople who have large investments in their rental properties. The clients usually are very concerned about the properties and how they are being managed. To provide clients with feedback, Luigi and his staff write reports. Writing these reports takes a lot of time.

This past week, Luigi and his staff put in more than twenty hours writing a formal report to a client who is building a large apartment complex. Luigi is managing the project. The report includes information on the status of the project, costs, completion date, and other details.

The previous week was the first week of the month. During this week, reports on the previous month’s activities are sent to owners. Thus, the staff worked overtime about fifteen hours.

At last, the weekend is here, but Luigi finds himself at the office on Saturday. He is completing a special report for a client who is considering selling her property. She wants Luigi to provide information on the profit of the property for the last five years.

While Luigi is taking a short break to relax, he starts thinking about his business and how the time spent preparing reports is growing. He wonders if there is anything he can do. He decides he will ask his staff members if they have any ideas on Monday.

Questions

1. How important do you think effective reports are to the success of Luigi’s business?

2. If you were a staff member, what suggestions would you give Luigi?
Types of Reports

A report is a document that provides facts, opinions, or ideas about a specific topic or problem. Reports are business tools that help managers make decisions and solve problems. Reports can be classified according to their style, purpose, and format.

Style

The two styles of reports are formal and informal. Formal reports generally are long and contain preliminary parts. A title page, a summary, and a table of contents may appear in a formal report. A bibliography and an appendix may also be included.

An example of a formal report is a company’s annual report to stockholders. A report to a government agency may be a formal report. Another example is an external proposal. This type of report analyzes a problem and recommends a solution.

Informal reports are typically shorter than formal reports. They are written in a less formal style. Typically, they have no preliminary pages except a title page. The everyday matters they discuss often require little background information.

A sales report is an example of an informal report. In a sales report, the writer summarizes sales for a specific period. An internal proposal is another type of informal report. Also known as a justification report, it is used to analyze an internal problem and recommend a solution.

Purpose

Reports can be designed to give information or an analysis of a problem. Informational reports present facts. They include very little analysis. For example, a bank manager may ask the head cashier to prepare an informational report about the average number and value of money orders sold each day. The parts of an informational report are the topics (subjects) or the areas investigated.

Analytical reports analyze a problem and present facts. They also draw conclusions and make recommendations. An analytical report suggests ways
to solve the problem. The parts of the report are the problem’s probable causes and solutions.

**Format**

Informal reports can be written in several different formats. Memo, letter, and manuscript formats are all used. Formal reports are longer and more complex than informal reports. They are written in manuscript format. Section 9.2 provides more information about formatting reports.

**Define the Report**

Before writing a report, you must do some planning and research. Even if you are simply reporting facts, you must gather those facts. You must arrange the facts in an easy-to-follow, logical sequence. The steps for planning a report are shown in Figure 9-1.

**Identify the Problem or Topic**

The first step is to identify the problem or topic to be studied and the objective of the report. As in planning letters and memos, determine why you are writing

**Figure 9-1 Planning a Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING A REPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the objective, problem, or topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Determine the scope of the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Develop a timeline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Collect the data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Develop a preliminary outline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Analyze the data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Draw conclusions and make recommendations.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Key Point**

For both informational and analytical reports, planning is an important first step.
Writers should clearly define the scope of the report (what will be included) as part of the planning stage.

The next step is to decide exactly what to investigate or discuss. **Scope** refers to the boundaries of the report—what will be included and what will not. A problem or topic may be very broad or have many aspects. For example, a report about the use of computers in all company departments will require more research and have a wider scope than a report that examines computer use in just two departments.

**Develop a Timeline**

Develop a schedule for collecting the data, analyzing the results, and writing the report. Identify the date when the report must be completed. Then develop a timeline to help you complete the research and report on time. A **timeline** is a schedule that lists the dates by which each task and phase of a project must be completed. An example timeline is shown in Figure 9-2. To set up a timeline, it is easiest to begin at the completion date and work backward.

**Figure 9-2 Report Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Completion Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the problem or topic and areas to investigate.</td>
<td>April 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the scope of the report.</td>
<td>April 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a timeline.</td>
<td>April 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect the data.</td>
<td>April 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a preliminary outline.</td>
<td>May 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze the data.</td>
<td>May 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw conclusions and make recommendations.</td>
<td>May 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write the first draft of the report.</td>
<td>May 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make revisions and create the final draft report.</td>
<td>May 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collecting the Data

The next step in creating a report is to do research by collecting appropriate data. Two sources of data are available—primary sources and secondary sources. **Primary research** involves gathering new data. **Secondary research** involves locating data that already have been gathered and reported.

**Primary Research**

If the facts you need are not available in books, magazines, Internet pages, or other sources, you may need to conduct primary research. To conduct this type of research, you might use interviews, surveys, or observations.

An **interview** is a conversation between two or more people. Questions are asked by an interviewer to gain facts, ideas, or opinions from the people who are being questioned. You might interview experts in the field, employees of a business, or customers. From these people, you may gain valuable data that may not be available from other sources. Many companies regularly seek their customers’ opinions on their products, prices, and services to help them better serve their markets.

A **survey** is a set of questions or statements used to learn facts or opinions. Surveys can be given in person, in writing, or by telephone. Surveys should use a carefully worded questionnaire. Designing and distributing the questionnaire can be expensive. Compiling the completed questionnaires also takes time and money. Therefore, before selecting this method of research, it is important to know that you have enough time and money to complete the project.

**Observation** means watching or monitoring people or things in an effort to learn something. For example, by observing people on the job, you may discover facts related to the workflow or operating procedures. You may be able to use these facts to draw conclusions about how to improve procedures. By observing customers using a product, you may learn which product features they like or dislike. This information can be used to improve future versions of the product. Like surveys, observations also take time and money. If more than one person will make the observations, standards or training may be needed to ensure that all observers report the same information in the same way.

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**Key Point**

Primary research can be conducted using interviews, surveys, or observation.

**Diversity**

Survey questions must be carefully worded to avoid bias relating to gender, age, race, or national origin.
Secondary Research

Research completed by others can be useful in creating reports. Data from research is available in print and online. Consult printed books, encyclopedias, periodicals, and other reports to gather information. Many libraries have database services. These databases offer a thorough listing of resources. Three databases that give information on business topics are listed below. Use these databases to help you find printed materials.

- *Business Periodicals Index*
- *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature*
- *The Wall Street Journal Index*

When conducting online research, using a search engine is a good way to find information on your research topic. A screen from Google, a popular search engine, is shown in Figure 9-3. Use the following steps to find information using a search engine. You can use a similar process to find information on Web sites for companies or organizations.

1. Access the search engine in your browser software.
2. Identify keywords or phrases that relate to the topic. For example, use the keyword *telecommuting* for articles about this topic.
3. Enter the keywords into the search box. Start the search.

Figure 9-3 Google is a popular Internet search engine.

4. Review the list of search results, called the hit list. Some search engines display the number of hits. Notice in Figure 9-3 that results 11–20 of 3,850,000 are displayed.

5. Click a link in the hit list that seems to provide the information you want. Sponsored links may appear at the top or side of the list. A company or organization has paid to have these links appear with the keywords you entered. They may or may not contain useful information.

6. Review the material from this source.

7. Go back to the hit list. Review other sources.

8. Try other keywords if the hit list does not contain the information you seek. To narrow the results, you may need to use the advanced search features of the program. See the Occupational Success article in this chapter for information on advanced search techniques.

Some of the most useful sources of information are found inside a company. Internal reports, memos, and reports to stockholders can provide valuable data. Many companies post their annual reports on their Web sites. Annual reports contain information about a company, such as directors and officers, financial highlights, new initiatives, and future plans.

The U.S. government is another good source of information. It publishes reports on a variety of subjects. For example, the U.S. Census Bureau provides data about the people and the economy of the United States. Figure 9-4 shows a screen from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site.

**Figure 9-4 The U.S. Census Bureau provides data on the U.S. population.**


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**Key Point**

When conducting online research, try other keywords if the hit list does not contain the information you seek.
Searching for Data Online

Being able to find relevant data online quickly will help you prepare reports efficiently. When searching for data online, clearly focus your search to locate the information that will be most useful to you. Using advanced search techniques will allow you to enter more than one keyword or phrase. Boolean operators may be used to connect two or more keywords or phrases. The most common Boolean operators are OR, AND, and NOT (or AND NOT).

Using the term OR broadens your search. A larger list of sources (hit list) will result because only one of the search terms you enter needs to be present. For example, suppose you enter the terms chocolate OR candy. The software will return a list of sites containing either the word chocolate or the word candy. However, both words may not be within the same result.

The Boolean operator AND is used to narrow a search. When AND is used, all search terms must be present in each source on the hit list. For example, if you entered branch AND tree, the list would include only hits containing both the word branch and the word tree. Hits containing only one of the terms would not be listed. This strategy produces a shorter hit list with articles that may be more on target. Be careful, however, not to eliminate some useful sources that may not include both terms in the text.

When you want to eliminate a specific term from the hit list, it may be appropriate to use the Boolean operator NOT or AND NOT. For instance, suppose you enter the search terms tree AND NOT bonsai. The resulting hit list would include all sources containing the word tree but not those referring to bonsai trees.

Truncation is a method of broadening a search. A base or root word is followed by a wildcard that allows the software to search for several similar keywords that begin with the same root. A wildcard is a symbol, such as an asterisk (*) or a question mark, used in conducting searches. A wildcard tells the software to return a list of sources containing all words that begin with that root or base word. For example, entering the search term pollut* would result in a hit list containing all the terms beginning with the base word pollut, including pollutant, pollute, polluter, and pollution. This is a handy tool to use when there are a number of similar words that may be relevant to your search.

Because some search engines or subject indexes handle advanced searches differently, you should review instructions at each search engine or subject index site before proceeding with an advanced search.
Evaluating Data Sources

When using data from secondary sources, you should evaluate the information you find. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is the information relevant to the topic or problem?
- Is the information true and accurate?
- Is the information reliable? Is it provided by a reputable source?
- Is the information current or useful?
- Is the information biased?

To be useful, the information must be relevant to the topic or problem you are researching. Although the data might be interesting, it cannot help you if it is not related to the topic or problem.

Always check the validity and reliability of your sources. Validity means that the data presented give accurate facts. Reliability indicates that the information is free of errors. If several sources you find offer the same or similar information, that is a good indication that it is reliable. If there is one source that offers dramatically different data, you should question its reliability.

Check to see if the information is provided by a reputable source. Is the research data provided by a university or a government agency? Can you tell who publishes the Web site? Are the name, title, affiliation, and contact information clearly listed? If the information you have found is outdated, it may be of little use to your research project. Pay attention to dates of publication as well as the dates on which the information was placed on a Web site.

Finally, ask yourself if the information from the article, book, or Web page is well balanced and lacks bias. You may discover bias relating to age, gender, race, or national origin. You also may notice bias simply in the way information is slanted in the presentation. Anyone can publish information giving his or her own viewpoint. Avoid using information that presents an obvious bias.

Bibliography Notes

As you conduct your research, you should use a method of identifying your sources. This method is called documentation. A bibliography is a list of sources used in preparing the report. You can document sources by preparing a note, as shown in Figure 9-5 on page 320, for every source. These notes provide the details for the bibliography that the formal report will include. The notes in Figure 9-5 have been keyed in a word processing program. If you have access to a computer, you may be able to key or handwrite notes for printed sources as you do your research. If not, you may need to handwrite the notes on paper.
For each source that you use, prepare a note similar to the one shown in Figure 9-5. For books, list the author’s full name (last name first), the book title (in italics), the publisher’s location and name, the publication date and the page numbers.

When you use information from a magazine article, list the author’s full name (last name first), the article title (in quotation marks), the magazine title (in italics), the publication date, and the page numbers. An example is shown in Figure 9-5.

When you use an electronic source, list the author’s name (if given) and the title of the article or Web page. List the name of the Web site. List the Web site address (URL) and the date you access the site. Indicate that the source is a CD-ROM instead of the URL if that is the case. All this information may not be available. List as much of the information as you can. An example is shown in Figure 9-5.

**Ethics**

Always give credit to the source of information you use in reports. Refer to Chapter 2 for more information on copyrights and plagiarism.

**Research Notes**

Prepare a separate note for each point you plan to mention in your report. In many cases, you will summarize the information you locate in a secondary source, as illustrated in Figure 9-6 on page 321. When you want to use a direct quote, copy the text exactly as shown in the source.

Avoid plagiarism (using another’s work as your own) by clearly identifying your sources. Copyright laws protect the interests of the person who created the work. Even if the information does not fall under copyright protection, ethical behavior requires you to give credit to the source. You may want to briefly summarize the main points of all articles you read, even if you do not think you will use the material in your report. You can review these notes along with the others when you write the report to make sure you are not including material without crediting the source.
Processing the Data

Once the data has been collected, organize the data in a meaningful way. Analyze the data and use your findings to draw conclusions. Make recommendations based on your findings and conclusions.

Create a Report Outline

An outline is a listing of topics in a logical order. Prepare a preliminary outline to organize the facts you found in your research. This outline is not the final outline used to write your report. It is simply a way of organizing the information you gathered. The outline for an informational report can be arranged in several ways.

- **Chronological Order.** Organize the facts in relation to time; that is, what happened first, next, and so forth.
Order of Importance. Arrange the facts in order of importance, from the most to the least important or vice versa.

Logical Sequence. Group the facts according to a logical order of steps—first, second, third, and so forth.

Category. Separate the facts into categories; for example, stocks, bonds, and certificates of deposit.

Geographical Order. Organize the facts by location.

When outlining analytical reports, you can organize the facts in one of two ways. One method is to use a hypothesis. A hypothesis is a possible solution for a problem or situation that can be tested. The second method is to use alternatives. An alternative is a possible solution or course of action that may be selected from those available.

When working from a hypothesis, include each possible explanation in your outline. The following outline shows two hypotheses (the plural of hypothesis) for a drop in auto sales. Under each hypothesis are the questions that must be answered to prove or disprove the hypothesis.

I. Our prices are too high. (Hypothesis)
   A. What are our prices?
   B. What are our competitors’ prices?
   C. How important is price to our customers?

II. The quality of our product is low. (Hypothesis)
   A. What is our repair record?
   B. How does our repair record compare with that of competitors?
   C. What are the results of product evaluations?

To examine alternatives to a problem, list them in your preliminary outline. For example, suppose you want to determine where to install new computers in your school building. One alternative is to research the number of courses in each subject that uses computers.

Another alternative is to research the number of students enrolled in each course that uses computers.

I. Number of classes taught using computers (Alternative)
   A. Paralegal courses
   B. Business courses
   C. Health technology courses

II. Number of students enrolled (Alternative)
    A. Paralegal courses
    B. Business courses
    C. Health technology courses
The preliminary outline follows either a topical format or a discussion format. In a topical outline, headings—the words that start each section—describe in a few words the topics you have investigated. A discussion outline provides more information about the topics and the subtopics—the topics that are included under each heading. A discussion outline takes longer to write, but it is often more helpful when writing the report.

**Topical Outline**

I. Characteristics of IM  
   A. Speed  
   B. Cost  
   C. Equipment

**Discussion Outline**

I. IM offers the latest technology for sending messages.  
   A. It offers speed.  
   B. It is often free via the Internet.  
   C. All that is needed is a computer.

**Key Point**

A topical outline or a discussion outline can be used in planning a report.
**Analyze the Data**

**Analyze** means to examine, study closely, or evaluate in order to understand something better than before. Take an initial look at the data. Are any of the findings surprising or unusual? Can you answer any of the questions you listed with the data in this form?

To analyze the data, look for logical links between facts and figures. If you are working with numbers, compare and contrast figures. When you look at answers from interviews or surveys, you can ask questions such as the following:

- How many times was this answer given?
- What percentage of the people responding gave this answer?
- What is the average rating this answer received?
- What response to this question occurs most often?
- What response to this question occurs least often?

**Ethics**

Consider all the data you find when preparing a report. Using only selected data that supports your hypothesis or alternative is unethical.

**Reading for Research**

Reading is an important skill that you will use when looking for secondary research materials. You may have to review many articles and Web pages to find the data you need. Before reading an entire article or page carefully, scan the material to see if it is relevant to your research.

Many people read only the headline and first paragraph of news articles. For this reason, magazine and newspaper articles (found in print or online) are typically written in direct order. The main ideas are presented early in the article. Supporting details follow in later paragraphs. Articles that present opinion or ideas, rather than news reports, may use an indirect approach. You may need to scan to the end of the article to find the main ideas.

The information that is presented in an article may not be complete. The writer may focus on points the reader will find interesting or “newsworthy.” As you scan an article, look for keywords or phrases you can use to search for related information. Use the questions presented in this chapter to evaluate the information you find for relevance, accuracy, reliability, bias, and timeliness.

Open the *Word* file *CH09 Reading* from the student data files. Follow the directions in the exercise to scan a news article, find the main idea, and identify keywords for further research.
Organize the data in a logical way. For example, you could arrange sales figures by region from lowest to highest. You could arrange the responses to a survey question by most favorable to least favorable answers. Suppose you researched the high turnover rate of production supervisors in your company. You might put the data into three categories as shown below.

- Salaries of different supervisory jobs in the company
- Salaries offered by competing manufacturers
- The number and kinds of promotions supervisors have received at each job level

### Draw Conclusions and Make Recommendations

Use the data you have analyzed to try to answer your list of questions developed earlier. Do the results make sense? Are there any standards to which they can be compared? Do they seem logical based on what you know about the problem or topic? If not, more research or analysis may be needed.

If the results seem to be reasonable, try to reach some conclusions. A **conclusion** is an opinion you form that is based on studying the data. A possible conclusion for the study about production supervisors is shown in the following example.

**Production supervisors in our company have limited advancement opportunities.**

Include recommendations in a report if you have been asked to do so. A **recommendation** offers a suggestion of what should be done. Recommendations should be related to conclusions, as in the following example.

**I recommend that supervisory positions within our company be reorganized to provide opportunities for career advancement.**

Key Point
Organize the data in a logical way that will help you draw conclusions.

Key Point
Recommendations in a report should be related to conclusions that are based on the research findings.

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1. List five ways the outline for an informational report can be arranged.
2. List two ways the outline for an analytical report can be arranged.
3. How does a discussion outline differ from a topical outline?
   Check your answers in Appendix C.
Section 9.1 *Applications*

**A. Types of Report**
Indicate whether you would use an informational or an analytical report in response to each request.

1. Send me a memo report on our sales for the past six months. I want the data organized by region.
2. I need a report on possible solutions for the problems our department is having with the reporting system.
3. Prepare a report that examines the alternatives available for providing life insurance coverage for employees.
4. Create a report that summarizes the progress we have made on converting to the new accounting software.
5. Do some research and send me a report with your recommendation for how to solve the customer support problems we are having.

**B. Report Style and Format**
Indicate the style (formal or informal) and format (letter, memo, or manuscript) for each report.

1. Send me a memo with details on our returned goods for the past three months.
2. Prepare a report that examines the alternatives available for buying versus renting office copy machines.
3. Send a letter to the director of the Human Resources Department that reports on training programs completed by employees in our department.

**C. Report Research**
You have been asked to do research for a report on ways your company can improve customer service.

1. Search the Internet or other sources to find an article on customer service.
2. Prepare a topic outline of the article.
3. Place a bibliography note below the outline.
4. Prepare a research note that gives a short, direct quote from the article.
Organizing Informal Reports

Most business reports are informal reports that have one of two purposes. They present information that has been requested, or they analyze a problem and report the findings. The organization and the format of these reports vary depending on the nature of the message and the recipients.

Like business letters and memos, informal reports are organized around a main idea. Supporting information is included about the main idea. If the report is an informational report, the main idea is that you are providing data that has been requested. If the report is analytical, the main idea is its recommendation.

Informal reports may be organized in direct order or indirect order. The order you choose depends on how you expect your reader to receive the message. Sometimes you cannot know which order to use until you have completed the planning process described in Section 9.1.

OBJECTIVES

After completing Section 9.2, you should be able to:

1. Explain when to use direct or indirect order for reports.
2. Create a report outline.
3. Name the parts of an informal report.
4. Write an informal report.
Direct Order

If the report is routine (a weekly sales report, for example) or if you expect the reader to respond favorably, use direct order. Present the main idea first. Follow with supporting details. Busy managers prefer reading this type of report since the main idea appears at the beginning.

Informational reports, such as progress reports, commonly use direct order. In those reports, the results (or main ideas) appear at the beginning. Analytical reports that are likely to have a favorable response also are organized in direct order. The main ideas appear first, followed by the supporting information.

Indirect Order

Use indirect order when you expect an unfavorable response. When the receiver may need persuasion to accept the main idea, use indirect order. You can buffer the main idea by presenting the data and the reasons first. For example, use indirect order in an internal proposal when managers are likely to be hesitant about approving the project or the budget. You might also use indirect order for a troubleshooting report. This is a type of analytical report in which you investigate a problem and propose a solution.

Outlining and Writing Informal Reports

Once you decide how to organize your report, you are ready to write an outline. Outlining helps you identify and position the topics and subtopics you will include. After placing the main idea and the supporting information in a logical sequence, you can begin writing the report.

Report Outlines

As you start to outline an informal report, use the preliminary outline you developed to guide your research. The outline will need some revision because of what you learned from collecting and analyzing the data. Once you have revised the outline, use it as a guide for writing the final report.
Outlines for informal reports organized in direct or indirect order are shown in Figures 9-7 and 9-8.

Figure 9-7 is an outline for an informational report organized in direct order. Notice that the main idea comes first, followed by the findings.

**Figure 9-7 Informational Report Outline in Direct Order**

I. Introduction  
II. Main idea: Clay State Bank, preferred bank for our firm  
III. Areas investigated  
IV. Findings: banking needs at our firm  
   A. Low-cost check writing  
   B. Online account availability  
   C. Online loan payment system  
   D. Courteous, friendly service  
V. Findings: comparison to other local banks  
   A. Second County Bank  
   B. Monroe and Hayes National Bank  
   C. Citywide Bank  
   D. Tondo Savings and Loan  
VI. Closing

Figure 9-8 on page 330 is an outline for an analytical report. The report is organized in indirect order. The findings and supporting details are presented first. The conclusion and recommendation follow the details.

**Writing Style**

Informal reports usually are written in a relatively personal style. Personal pronouns and contractions are often used in this style. If your report is about a serious problem or if it is going to a senior manager, you may want it to be more formal. In that case, you would write your report in an impersonal style, without using first- or second-person pronouns and contractions.

The impersonal style keeps a report from sounding like one person's opinion. It does not refer to I, me, or you. A report written in an impersonal style emphasizes the facts rather than the writer. The report sounds more objective than a report written in a personal style.
When writing about the data you have collected, use the present tense or the past tense. Use the past tense when writing about events in the past and the present tense when writing about events that are still occurring. Avoid switching back and forth between tenses when presenting the data. Switching can confuse your readers, who may have difficulty following the timing or sequence of events.

**Key Point**

Be consistent in using the present tense or the past tense when writing about data in a report.

**Figure 9-8 Analytical Report Outline in Indirect Order**

I. Introduction
   A. Report objective
   B. Area investigated

II. Findings and supporting details
   A. Production supervisors’ salaries compare favorably with those of competing organizations.
   B. Fringe benefits are satisfactory.
   C. Opportunities for advancement are limited.

III. Conclusion: Production supervisors in our company have have limited advancement opportunities.

IV. Recommendation: Supervisory positions should be changed to provide opportunities for career advancement.

V. Closing

**Check Point 6**

1. What writing style is typically used for informal reports?
2. When should an impersonal writing style be used for a report?
3. Does a personal or an impersonal writing style make a report seem more objective?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
Formatting Informal Reports

Informal reports have three basic formats. They may be formatted like letters, memos, or manuscripts. The format depends on the receiver and the length of the report.

Parts of an Informal Report

Regardless of the format used, informal reports have three main parts: the opening, the body, and the closing.

The length of the opening will vary according to the purpose of the report. For a brief memo report, the opening might be only a subject line. For other informal short reports written in direct order, the opening may include the following information:

- The subject and purpose of the report (the reason the report is important)
- Recommendations
- A preview of the sections of the report
- The summary of findings or the conclusions

The body of a report includes the findings and supporting details that resulted from the research. Your revised outline will provide the organizational plan for this section. This section is usually the longest and must be well organized so the report is easy to understand.

The closing of a report is important because it is the final opportunity to impress the reader. If you are writing a report in direct order, you should reemphasize the main idea in this last section.

When using indirect order, present the objective of the report and the area investigated. Then give a summary of findings. Finally, give the conclusions and recommendations (analytical reports). Make sure that the conclusions are supported by the data. If the report includes several conclusions or recommendations, use a list format for simplicity.

Letter Reports

External reports, those written for people outside the organization, often are written in letter format. (See Chapter 7 for details on formatting letters.) These reports are called letter reports. In general, an informal report written in letter format should be five pages or less. Remember to include a heading on each page of the letter after the first page. The heading should contain the recipient’s name, the page number, and the date. If you need more than five pages, use the manuscript format. Manuscript format allows you to separate the various parts of the report so readers can follow the organization of the material.

Ethics

Confidential data may be used in some reports. Be careful to share the report only with people who are authorized to see the data.

Key Point

Letter reports are typically written for people outside the organization.
The opening may mention who asked for the report and the date the report was assigned. The report body includes findings and supporting details. It may include an analysis of the situation being studied and recommendations to resolve problems. The ending is similar to the closing in a letter. If possible, the ending should mention some expected action on the part of the reader or writer. See Figure 9-9 on page 333 for an example of a letter report.

**Memo Reports**

A memo report is a short internal report written in memo format. It is sent to others within the organization. These reports are informal primarily because of their format, not necessarily because of their content. If a memo report is longer than one page, use a heading on all pages after the first page. The page headings should contain the recipient’s name, the page number, and the date. Side headings may be used within the body of the report to facilitate locating information.

Use the memo format for routine internal reports that are five pages or less. (See Chapter 7 for detailed information on formatting memos.) If the report needs to be longer, use the manuscript format. An example of a memo report is shown in Figure 9-10 on page 334.

**Manuscript Reports**

Informal manuscript reports are short reports written in manuscript format. They are usually longer than memo or letter reports but not as long as formal reports. They can be used either internally (a proposal to a supervisor) or externally (a report to a client).

The opening may include the following information:

- The subject of the report
- The purpose of the report (the reason the subject is important)
- A preview of the sections of the report

If you are writing in direct order, include the summary of findings (informational report) or the recommendations (analytical report) in the opening. See Figure 9-11 on pages 335 and 336 for an example of a manuscript report.

1. What parts are included in an informal report?
2. What information is typically included in the opening for an informal short report written in direct order?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
Raleigh Consulting Group
216 Marginal Road, Raleigh, NC 27612-7643
Phone: (919) 555-0170

December 11, 20--

Mr. Ray Park
Human Resources Manager
Southern Textiles
6 Kingston Street
Elm City, NC 27822-1463

Dear Mr. Park:

As you requested, this report discusses recommended training programs for new shift supervisors. After talking with your plant manager and with 12 newly promoted supervisors, I recommend that you consider a two-day management and communication course.

Management Training

New shift supervisors have no management background. An intensive one-day training program would provide ideas that the supervisors can apply immediately. The program would cover basic management functions and strategies for managing quality improvement.

Communication Training

New shift supervisors must be able to communicate with workers, peers, top managers, and union officials. A one-day training program would give these supervisors the speaking and writing skills they need to be effective. This program would cover oral and written communication, listening, and feedback.

Our manufacturing clients have found that two consecutive days of training immediately after a promotion can provide the tools new supervisors need to be productive right away. Please call me so we can discuss how to tailor this course to your firm’s needs. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,

Anna Ruiz
Dr. Anna Ruiz, President

Figure 9-9 Letter Report
TO: All Dieticians

FROM: Isadora Villegas, Chief Dietician

DATE: August 29, 20--

SUBJECT: High School Visits

Every high school in School District 3 has signed up for our free annual menu consultation. With the information we provide about menu items, serving size, and ingredients, the schools are better able to plan their monthly food purchases. In turn, we learn more about the students’ and teachers’ special dietary needs.

Because of the need to complete these visits before school begins, I have arranged the following schedule for high school visits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dietician</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allman, Thelma</td>
<td>Central High School</td>
<td>August 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auburn Regional High School</td>
<td>August 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moroni, Lonzo</td>
<td>Campbell High School</td>
<td>August 19</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Morrow High School</td>
<td>August 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sogo, Kamal</td>
<td>Avondale High School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>MLK High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanese, Kent</td>
<td>Forest Park High School</td>
<td>August 19</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Riverdale High School</td>
<td>August 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Credit Records Storage Facility

The Credit Department proposes that a new credit records storage facility be created in the regional office. This facility will handle seasonal variations in credit volume. It will also allow for future growth in credit sales. The facility would store credit and collection records for up to 1,000 regional customers. This recommendation is made after the analysis of physical specifications, environmental factors, a construction schedule, and a file transfer schedule.

Physical Specifications
The proposed storage facility should meet the specifications described in the following sections.

Space
An area of 7,000 to 9,000 square feet is needed for the storage facility.

Furniture and Equipment
Two rectangular workstations with seating for two at each station are needed. Each workstation should be equipped with two desktop computers, two scanners, and one printer. The computers should be linked with the central credit processing system. Each workstation requires two chairs. In addition, one 3’ x 6’ table for file preparation is required.

Credit applications must be retained for two years. To hold these records, provide 10 linear feet of reinforced steel shelving. The shelving should be 8’ high with 16” between shelves. The lowest shelf must be positioned at least 3’ above floor level.

Customer correspondence about credit disputes or collections must be stored. Provide six four-drawer letter-size file cabinets for these records. To hold returned mail from credit and collection accounts, provide two rolling storage bins.

One multiline telephone should be installed at each workstation. These telephones should be linked with the regional office’s voice mail system.

Provide one fax machine for sending credit documents. The fax must be equipped with a 30-page document feeder and a letter-size tray to hold incoming faxes.

Security
The file storage facility must be secure both day and night. Provide one card-activated locking system with a manual override in case of power failure.
Wiring
Appropriate writing should be provided for the following equipment:
- Desktop computers and printers
- Scanners
- Fax equipment

Environment Factors
The file storage area should meet the certain standards. The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system must allow a temperature range between 68 and 78 degrees Fahrenheit. A humidity level of 40-60 percent is required. Indirect lighting and task lighting is needed at the workstations. For all other areas in this facility, provide standard ceiling lighting.

Construction Schedule
Every year the Credit Department has heavier demand for records storage. This demand is because of increased credit and collection activity during the fall and winter months. To handle this seasonal demand, the facility should be ready by September 15.

File Transfer Schedule
The Credit Department will require two business days to transfer the current customer records from the downtown office to the new storage facility in the regional office. Customer correspondence records and files will be moved on the first day. Customer applications will be moved on the second day.

Summary
A storage facility constructed as described in this report would allow the Credit Department to handle records for all our customers. With the use of this storage facility, both seasonal storage demands and expected growth in records for future credit sales can be handled effectively.
Section 9.2 Applications

A. Analyze Data for a Report
You work at Kids First, a center that provides day care for children who are ages three to six years old. The center is small but successful. There is a waiting list of parents who want to place their children in the center. The owner, Louise Park, is considering increasing the number of children the center cares for each day. You have been asked to analyze the related information and prepare a report.

1. Analyze the following information to determine how much the center will gain or lose each month by caring for two additional children.
   - The center charges $125 per week to care for each child.
   - The center can care for two additional children per week with no increase in the number staff members.
   - The center will need to purchase additional nap mats and blankets if additional children are accepted. The one-time cost will be about $200.
   - A staff member meets with a parent of each child once a week for about 15 minutes to discuss the child’s care. The staff member is paid for this meeting at the rate of $12 per hour.
   - Fixed costs, such as rent, will not be increased by caring for two additional children. Increases in variable costs, such as water and electricity, are estimated at $10 per child per month.
   - Food for each child is estimated at $100 per month.

2. What other factors should be considered? For example, staff members will have an increased workload if the center cares for two additional children.

B. Create an Outline and a Report
1. Write an outline for a memo report. The objective of the report is to present the information you analyzed about the Kids First center and your recommendation. Organize the information in direct order.

2. Write a memo report using the outline you created. Give your conclusions about the data in the opening paragraph. Also, give your recommendation about whether the center should care for two additional children in the opening paragraph. Give an explanation of your analysis in the following paragraphs.
Organizing and Writing Formal Reports

Formal reports are more complex than informal reports. They are used when the report will be long or the research involved is extensive. Formal reports are used to report to top managers or to persons outside the company. They have preliminary and supplementary parts not found in informal reports. Because of the amount of time required to write formal reports, they are used only when absolutely necessary.

As with an informal report, the organization and writing style you choose for a formal report can vary. They depend on the nature of the message and the people who will receive it. Since formal reports are longer and more complex than informal reports, formal reports are formatted differently. Special manuals have been written for the formatting of formal reports. Some of them are the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA), the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (MLA), and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. The formal report shown in this text uses a traditional business format. The MLA guidelines are used for documentation.

**Direct and Indirect Order**

When organizing a formal report, you can use either direct or indirect order. Formal informational reports usually follow direct order. They contain information that readers expect. Readers, therefore, should react favorably. Formal analytical reports that will likely receive a favorable response also are organized in direct order. On the other hand, indirect order is used in a formal report when you expect an unfavorable response. Indirect order is also used when you may need to persuade the reader to accept the main idea.

**Writing Style**

Many important business decisions are made on the basis of the information presented in formal reports. With so much at stake, these reports need to sound impartial and professional. Thus, formal reports usually are written in an impersonal style. They do not use personal pronouns such as *you* and *I*. An impersonal writing style focuses attention on the facts rather than on the writer. It also makes the report sound objective.
Parts of a Formal Report

A formal report has three major parts: preliminary parts, body or text, and supplementary parts. These parts are described in the following sections.

Preliminary Parts

The preliminary parts are the parts of a formal report that appear first, providing the reader with information about the report body. Preliminary parts include a letter or memo of transmittal, a title page, a table of contents, and an executive summary.

A letter of transmittal or a memo of transmittal introduces a formal report to the reader. This document conveys what you would say if you were handing the report directly to the reader. Therefore, it is usually less formal than the report itself. A letter of transmittal may accompany a report to readers inside or outside the organization. A memo of transmittal would accompany a report for internal use. Use direct order for the letter or memo of transmittal. Begin

Objective reports help managers make business decisions.

Key Point

Preliminary parts are the parts of a formal report that appear first, providing the reader with information about the report body.

check point 8

1. Why are formal reports, rather than informal reports, used only when absolutely necessary?
2. Why are formal reports usually written in impersonal style?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
with a statement such as *Here is the report you asked me to prepare about ...*
Include a brief restatement of the report’s objective, followed by a short summary of the report. End by thanking the person who requested the report and offering assistance if needed. Figure 9-13 on page 342 shows a sample letter of transmittal.

A title page shows the report title; the name, title, and organization of the person for whom the report was written; the writer’s name, title, and organization; and the date the report is submitted. Figure 9-14 on page 343 shows a sample title page. You may use the title page as the report cover when the report is short or when the report is for internal use. Otherwise, use a cover made of heavy paper or plastic. Label the cover with the report title and, if desired, with the writer’s name and the date.

A **table of contents** is a list of what the report includes. Prepare the table of contents after the report is written by listing the main headings shown in the report and the page number where each heading occurs. Figure 9-15 on page 344 provides an example of a table of contents.

If you use *Word’s* styles to create the headings in the report, you can generate a table of contents automatically. Figure 9-12 shows options for a table of contents.

**Figure 9-12 Microsoft Word Table of Contents Options**

![Table of Contents](image)
An **executive summary**, sometimes called a **synopsis** or an **abstract**, is a brief overview of the report. The purpose of an executive summary is to give the key points of the report to the reader. An executive summary is especially important when a report is long and technical. It allows busy readers to grasp the main points quickly without reading the entire report. An executive summary should use an indirect approach for reports written in indirect order. It should use a direct approach for reports written in direct order. Figure 9-16 on page 345 is an example of an executive summary.

**The Report Body**

The report body, which contains the text of the report, consists of three parts: the introduction; the findings and analysis; and the summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

The introduction states the purpose of the report. Figure 9-17 on page 346 shows an introduction to the body of the report. The introduction discusses several topics, including any or all of the following:

- **Authorization**
  - Statement of who authorized the report and the time and manner of authorization
- **Statement of the Problem**
  - Reasons for writing the report and the goals to be accomplished
- **Scope**
  - Information the report does and does not cover
- **Limitations**
  - Factors affecting the scope of the report, such as a limited amount of time or a limited budget
- **Definitions**
  - List of unfamiliar terms and their definitions

The findings and analysis section of the report body comes next. It presents the findings and the supporting details and examines those results. See Figure 9-18 on pages 347–349 for an example. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations section comes last. It gives the report objectives, summarizes the findings, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations. Figure 9-19 on page 350 provides an example of this section.

**Supplementary Parts**

A formal report may also contain supplementary parts that follow the report body, such as a bibliography or an appendix. The bibliography is a list of sources used in preparing the report. The sources are shown in alphabetic order by authors’ names. This page is called “Works Cited” when using MLA report format. Figure 9-20 on page 351 provides a sample Works Cited page.

---

**Key Point**

In reports written for school or for scholarly journals, the executive summary is often called a synopsis or an abstract.
May 5, 20--

Mr. Greg C. Gibson, Director  
Human Resources Department  
Lamps, Inc.  
7892 Gessner Drive  
Austin, TX 78753  
512-555-0125

Dear Mr. Gibson

On April 15, 20--, you asked me to research telecommuting programs. You also asked me to recommend whether to begin a telecommuting program at our Austin location. After completing my research, I recommend that the company begin a telecommuting program. The initial program should be only for employees in the Customer Service Call Center. The company may consider expanding the program later if it goes well with this department.

Several books and articles give information on the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting. A summary of this information is included in the report. I also analyzed the monetary costs and benefits to the company to reach this recommendation.

If you have any questions about the report or telecommuting, please call me at extension 2891. I think employees in the Customer Service Call Center will be excited about a telecommuting program.

Sincerely

Katelyn Parker  
Katelyn Parker  
Human Resources Associate
Telecommuting Program for Lamps, Inc.

Prepared for
Mr. Greg C. Gibson
Director of Human Resources
Austin Operations Center
Lamps, Inc.

Prepared by
Katelyn Parker
Human Resources Associate
Austin Operations Center
Lamps, Inc.

May 5, 20–
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Methodology ................................................................................................................................................ iii
Summary and Conclusions .......................................................................................................................... iii
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Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 1
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Scope ........................................................................................................................................................... 1
Limitations ................................................................................................................................................... 1
Definitions .................................................................................................................................................... 1
Findings and Analysis ................................................................................................................................. 2
Advantages of Telecommuting .................................................................................................................. 2
Disadvantages of Telecommuting ............................................................................................................. 2
Employee Interest ........................................................................................................................................ 3
Costs and Benefits ....................................................................................................................................... 3
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations ......................................................................................... 5
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Executive Summary

The Austin Operations Center of Lamps, Inc., is considering implementing a telecommuting program for some employees. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not telecommuting is feasible for some workers in the Customer Service Call Center.

Methodology

The possible advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting were identified from secondary research. A review of the company’s current records provided costs for rent, taxes, and utilities for office space. Research was done to find approximate costs for a training program for employees and for new equipment and services that employees will need.

Summary and Conclusions

A telecommuting program for ten employees from the Customer Service Call Center at the Austin Operations Center will save the company about $41,980 in the first year of operation. In addition to the cost savings for the company, employees who take part in the program will have lower travel costs. They may also be more productive and satisfied with their jobs. These conditions may result in benefits to the company of more productive workers and less employee turnover. The teleworkers may use fewer sick days than they would if they were working at the company offices, which could save the company money.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the conclusions of this study:

- The company should implement a telecommuting program for ten employees from the Customer Service Call Center at the Austin Operations Center.

- The company should provide training for the employees who will telecommute and their supervisors. The training should detail what the company expects of teleworkers. It should also detail what teleworkers can expect from the company.

- The company should provide the equipment, telephone service, and Internet access needed by the employees who telecommute.
Introduction

Lamps, Inc. has successfully run an operations center in Austin, Texas, for the past 30 years. This manufacturing, sales, and operations center has over 250 employees. Employees average five years or longer with the company.

Recently, the company has become interested in ways to save money and implement green practices. Green practices are those that are friendly to the environment. Telecommuting, which lowers harmful pollutants released by cars, is one such practice. Employees are interested in the benefits they can gain from telecommuting, such as lower travel costs.

Statement of the Problem

The objective of this report is to determine whether or not telecommuting is feasible for this branch of Lamp, Inc. To achieve this objective, the advantages and disadvantages of a telecommuting program will be identified. Costs and savings will be analyzed. Based on the analysis, conclusions will be drawn. Then a recommendation will be made.

Scope

This report discusses the possibility of using telecommuting at the Austin Operations Center. Employees that take part in the program would be from the Customer Service Call Center.

Limitations

This report is limited to the Austin Operations Center. Other branches of Lamps, Inc., were not part of this study.

Definitions

These definitions are listed to assist the reader.

- Telework is defined as “a variety of business situations where individuals use technology to work from somewhere other than a traditional workplace.”

- Telecommuting is defined as “performing work at a place other than a traditional workplace in accordance with the terms of an employee and employer agreement” (Fulton-Calkins, 58–59).
Findings and Analysis

A review of secondary research provided a list of possible advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting programs. A review of the company’s current records provided costs for rent, taxes, and utilities for office space. Research was done to determine costs for a training program for employees and for new equipment and services that employees will need. A survey was used to determine employee interest in telecommuting.

Advantages of Telecommuting
There can be several advantages to telecommuting for both the company and the employees. Some advantages for employees and employers are listed below.

- No commuting time is required. Employees have more time to work or do other activities. Employees save money on fuel and upkeep for cars.
- Employees may experience lower stress levels. The home or other off-site setting may be more relaxing for workers than an office setting. There is no stress from driving or heavy traffic.
- Fewer interruptions may mean more productive work time for employees. Scheduling may be flexible, depending on the job.
- Companies may have lower costs for office space, furnishings, and other overhead items.
- Employees may find a telecommuting program attractive. Companies may be able to keep employees longer and have less turnover. This means lower hiring and training costs.
- Employees may take fewer sick days for minor illnesses or injuries. Bad weather will not prevent employees from working when they cannot travel to the company location (“Telecommuting Advantages”).

Telecommuting programs can also provide advantages for the community. According to Tom Harnish, who studies the effects of telework, “Telecommuting offers the community less highway congestion, lower greenhouse gas pollution, and less dependence on foreign oil” (“New Study”).

Disadvantages of Telecommuting
Although there are advantages of telecommuting, there can also be disadvantages. Some of the disadvantages are shown in the following list.
Figure 9-18 Findings and Analysis Continued

- Telecommuting works for some jobs but not for others (Weisman, 16). For example, when machinery is required for production of a product, workers must go to the machinery to do their work. Those workers cannot telecommute.

- Managers and employees must adjust to a lack of direct supervision of workers. Job performance must be measured by whether work is completed correctly and in a timely manner (Weisman, 16).

- Telecommuting involves security risks. Teleworkers often connect to a company network using a computer at home. The home computer may be at higher risk for viruses, Trojan horses, spyware, and other destructive programs. (Pelgrin)

- Some teleworkers may feel isolated. Some people enjoy the social aspects of the workplace and miss interacting with other employees in person.

- A separate telephone line is needed at the worker’s home to handle business calls. Family members and others in the home must understand that this line is only for the teleworker’s use (Fawkner). Other equipment, such as a printer or fax machine, and Internet access may also be needed.

**Employee Interest**

A questionnaire was given to employees in the Customer Service Call Center to determine their interest in a telecommuting program. The questionnaire is provided in the Appendix. Of the 30 employees, 15 employees indicated that they would like to take part in a telecommuting program. However, a certain number of employees are needed in the office to deal with situations that teleworkers may not be able to handle. Some employees may not have the discipline or organization skills that are needed for successful teleworkers. Therefore, the company must decide the number of employees to be part of the initial program.

**Costs and Benefits**

The following data relate to savings and costs for implementing a telecommuting program.

- The company pays $27 per square foot per year for office space at the Austin Center. The company pays about $15.90 per square foot of office space per year for related utilities and taxes.

- The company will no longer need to rent 1,200 square feet of office space if ten employees from the Customer Service Call Center telecommute.

- Teleworkers will need a separate telephone line and Internet access at their homes. This service will cost approximately $50 per month per worker.

- Teleworkers will use the computers that they now use at work, so no additional cost will be incurred for computers.
- The company’s telephone system can be set up to forward customer service calls to the teleworkers’ home telephone at no additional cost.

- Teleworkers share a printer at the office. Teleworkers will need printers at home. A printer/fax machine will cost about $150 per worker. This will be part of the startup costs for the program.

- Employees who will telecommute will take a two-day training course related to telework and what the company expects of them. This course will cost the company $2,000 for ten teleworkers and three supervisors.

Table 1 shows the analysis of the cost data. Note that a net savings of $41,980 will result the first year. Changes in rental, utility, and tax rates and the need to replace equipment (computers or printers) may result in different figures for later years. If other employees take part in the program in future years, the training program may be needed again.

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings</th>
<th>Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$ 27.00 Office Rent</td>
<td>$ 50.00 Telephone and Internet Months per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.90 Utilities and Taxes</td>
<td>12 Months per Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 42.90 Total</td>
<td>$ 600.00 Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,200 Sq. Ft. Office Space No Longer Required</td>
<td>$6,000.00 Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 150.00 Printer/Fax Cost</td>
<td>10 Printers Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,500.00 Total</td>
<td>$2,000.00 Training Program Cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$51,480.00 Total Saving First Year</td>
<td>$9,500.00 Total Costs First Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The Austin Operations Center of Lamps, Inc., is considering implementing a telecommuting program for some employees. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not telecommuting is feasible for some workers in the Customer Service Call Center. The possible advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting were identified from secondary research. A review of the company’s current records provided costs for rent, taxes, and utilities for office space. Research was done to find approximate costs for a training program for employees and for new equipment and services that employees will need. A survey was used to determine employee interest in telecommuting.

The report findings support several conclusions. A telecommuting program for ten employees from the Customer Service Call Center at the Austin Operations Center will save the company about $41,980 in the first year of operation. In addition to the cost savings for the company, employees who take part in the program will have lower travel costs. They may also be more productive and satisfied with their jobs. These conditions may result in benefits to the company of more productive workers and less employee turnover. The teleworkers may use fewer sick days than they would if they were working at the company offices, which could save the company money.

The following recommendations are based on these conclusions:

- The company should implement a telecommuting program for ten employees from the Customer Service Call Center at the Austin Operations Center.
- The company should provide training for the employees who will telecommute and their supervisors. The training should detail what the company expects of teleworkers. It should also detail what teleworkers can expect from the company.
- The company should provide the equipment, telephone service, and Internet access needed by the employees who telecommute.
- The company’s Information Technology Department should work with the teleworkers to be sure their home computers and/or networks have the proper security measures in place.


“New Study Quantifies Pollution Reduced by Telecommuters.” Business Wire 17 April, 2008. 29 May 2008 <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0EiN/is_2008_April_17/ai_n25335034>.


Appendix

Employee Questionnaire on Telecommuting

Respond to each question by checking the appropriate column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

I believe that telecommuting would lower my travel costs.
I believe that telecommuting helps the environment.
I believe that telecommuting will allow me to be more productive.
I believe that telecommuting will allow me to experience less job-related stress.
I believe that my job can be performed effectively from my home office.
I believe that I have the discipline and organization needed to be a successful teleworker.
I believe that telecommuting will make me feel isolated from my coworkers and have a negative impact on my work.
I believe that I will be happier with my job situation if I am given the opportunity to telecommute.
I believe that not all job situations lend themselves to telecommuting.
I am interested in taking part in a telecommuting program.
An appendix contains supplementary materials that are placed at the end of a document or book. These related materials are too long to be included in the body. Examples of appendix items include questionnaires and a glossary of terms. Figure 9-21 on page 352 shows a sample appendix.

**Formatting Formal Reports**

Formal reports generally follow specific formatting guidelines. A company may develop its own style manual. A style manual is a set of guidelines for formatting documents. This manual helps report writers plan the appropriate margins, spacing, headings, and other details.

**Margins and Spacing**

For an unbound report, use a top margin of 2 inches on the first page and on the first page of new sections, such as a Works Cited page. On the other pages, use a top margin of 1 inch. Use 1 inch for side and bottom margins for all pages. If the report will be bound, increase the left margin on all pages to 1.5 inches.

Follow the spacing guidelines given for the particular format being used. For example, MLA style requires double spacing for paragraphs. The example report in this section uses the *Word 2007* default spacing of 1.15 lines with 10 points of space after a paragraph.

**Headings**

Use headings to help organize and present data. Headings help the reader follow the line of thought as they move from point to point in the report. A first-level heading is a heading that opens a major section. For example, a first-level heading is a heading identified with a Roman numeral in the report outline. A second-level heading is a heading that introduces a subtopic below a first-level heading.

The headings of the same level within a section, such as second-level headings in an outline, should be parallel in form. Parallel headings show readers that the ideas are grouped for a reason. If one heading begins with a noun,
all headings at that level should begin with a noun. If one heading begins with a verb, all other headings should begin with a verb. This usage makes the headings parallel. In addition, each level should have a minimum of two headings. Examples of parallel headings and headings that are not parallel are shown below.

**Headings Are Parallel**

I. Steps in planning  
   A. Defining the objective  
   B. Determining the project leader  
      1. Vendor  
      2. Outside consultant  
II. Feasibility study

**Headings Are Not Parallel**

I. Plan the study  
   A. Defining the objective  
   B. Determine project leader  
      1. Vendor  
      2. Hiring an outside consultant  
II. Feasibility study

**Visual Aids**

Most formal reports (and many informal reports) include visual aids and graphics. Charts, graphs, tables, pictures, and photos help the reader understand and interpret written information. With computers, producing graphics is easy and inexpensive. Visual aids and their use in reports are described in Chapter 10.

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**Key Point**  
The headings of the same level within a report should be parallel in form.

**Key Point**  
Visual aids (graphs, tables, and pictures) help the reader understand and interpret written data.

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**check point**  
1. What are the preliminary parts of a formal report? Are these parts placed before or after the report body?  
2. What are two supplementary report parts that follow the report body?  
   Check your answers in Appendix C.
A. Formal or Informal Report
Indicate whether you would use a formal or an informal report in response to each request.

1. Send me a report on our returned goods for the past six months. I want the data organized by region.

2. We are considering a telecommuting program for our customer service associates. Do an extensive study of costs and benefits to present to senior managers.

3. Prepare a report that examines the alternatives available for training on the new telephone system we have installed.

4. Create a report that summarizes the progress we have made on transferring files to the new storage location.

5. Create a report with your recommendation for how to change our running shoes to increase sales. You will need to do both primary and secondary research. The report will be evaluated by company senior managers.

B. Parts of a Formal Report
Indicate the part of a formal report that is described.

1. A part that tells the conclusions reached

2. A part that introduces the report to the reader

3. A part that lists the sections included in the report

4. A part of the body that states the purpose of the report

5. A part of the body that gives the limitations of the report

6. A part of the body that describes the data and how it was handled

7. A part of the body that advises the reader how to proceed

8. A part of the report that contains a list of source materials used in the report

9. A part of the report that contains supplementary material related to the report

10. A part of the report that tells what is and is not covered in the report
Chapter Summary

9.1 Planning Reports

- A report is a document that provides facts, opinions, or ideas about a specific topic or problem.
- Before writing a report, the writer must do planning and research.
- Primary research involves gathering new data. Secondary research involves locating data that already has been gathered and reported.
- Once the data for a report has been collected, it should be organized in a meaningful way.
- Data are analyzed and the findings are used to draw conclusions. Recommendations are made based on the conclusions.

9.2 Writing Informal Reports

- Most business reports are informal reports. They present information that has been requested, or they analyze a problem and report the findings.
- Informal reports may be organized in direct order or indirect order.
- An outline is used to identify and position the topics and subtopics in a report.
- Informal reports usually are written in a relatively personal style. If a report is about a serious problem or if it is going to a senior manager, it should be written in an impersonal style.
- Informal reports have three main parts: the opening, the body, and the closing. They may be formatted like letters, memos, or manuscripts.

9.3 Writing Formal Reports

- Formal reports are more complex and longer than informal reports.
- Formal reports may be organized in direct or indirect order.
- Formal reports usually are written in an impersonal style.
- A formal report has three major parts: preliminary parts, body or text, and supplementary parts.
- The report format should follow the guidelines of the report style the writer has been instructed to use.
Vocabulary

Open the *Word* file *CH09 Vocabulary* from the student data files. Complete the exercise to review the vocabulary terms from this chapter.

- alternative
- analytical report
- analyze
- appendix
- bibliography
- conclusion
- documentation
- executive summary
- hypothesis
- informational report
- interview
- observation
- outline
- primary research
- recommendation
- report
- scope
- secondary research
- survey
- table of contents
- timeline
- wildcard

Critical Thinking Questions

1. The longer and more complex the report, the more important outlining is. Do you agree with that statement? Why or why not?
2. Why is it important to express the objective or topic of a report in a single statement?
3. Which is more difficult to do, primary research or secondary research? Why?
4. Why is evaluating the data you find an important part of the research phase of preparing a report?
5. *Paraphrasing*, *plagiarism*, and *documentation* are terms associated with reports. Discuss how these terms relate to one another.
A. Plan a Formal Report

1. Identify a topic or problem to be researched and studied for a formal report. The report can be an informational report or an analytical report. Ask your teacher to approve the topic.

2. Write a statement or question that identifies the objective of the report.

3. Determine the scope of the report. Decide what related areas will and will not be included in the report. You may need to modify the scope after you begin doing research.

4. Develop a timeline for completing the report. Start with the date your teacher gives you for completing the report. Work backward from that date to create a timeline.

B. Conduct Research for a Report

1. Decide whether primary research, such as collecting data from a survey, or secondary research is appropriate for the report. You might want to do both types of research.

2. Gather the data. Evaluate each source of data that you use to determine whether it is relevant, accurate, current, reliable, and unbiased.

3. Create a bibliography note and one or more research notes for each secondary data source you use.

C. Analyze Data for a Report

1. Prepare a preliminary outline to organize the data you found in your research.

2. Decide whether to use hypotheses or alternatives in the outline if you are doing an analytical report. Develop a list of questions you want to answer using the data.

3. Compile, compute, compare, contrast, or evaluate the data as appropriate for your project.

D. Draw Conclusions and Make Recommendations

1. Use the data you have analyzed to try to answer your list of questions developed earlier.

2. Using the data analysis, reach one or more conclusions about the topic or problem.
3. Prepare recommendations based on the conclusions if that is appropriate for your report.

**E. Write a Formal Report**

1. Create an outline for the report you have planned and researched. The outline may be a topic outline or a discussion outline.

2. Write the report using the outline you prepared earlier.
   - Create a letter or memo of transmittal for the report. Address the letter or memo to your teacher.
   - Prepare a title page and a table of contents. You will need to update the table of contents with the page numbers after you complete the report body.
   - Create an executive summary for the report.
   - Create the report body to include an introduction section; a findings and analysis section; and a summary and conclusions section. Also, include recommendations if that is appropriate for your report.
   - Prepare a Works Cited or Bibliography page.
   - Format the report like the one shown in the figures in Section 9.3 of this chapter unless your teacher requests that you use another format. Use the MLA style for citations in the text unless your teacher requests that you use another format.
   - Include an appendix at the end of the report if needed.
   - Work with a classmate to edit and proofread the report to be sure it is courteous, correct, concise, clear, and complete.

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**Editing Activity**

Open and edit the Word file **CH09 Editing** from the student data files. Correct all spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors.
Case Study

*Repair Shop Report*

As manager of the automotive repair shop for a local car dealer, you have a thriving business. Yesterday the owner of the dealership, Mr. Alvarez, asked you to prepare a report summarizing the past year’s activities in the shop. You saw some successes this past year, but you also had some problems.

The positives for the year were as follows:

- The 12 shop employees completed at least two training courses, preparing them to work on the new models coming out in the fall.
- On a questionnaire given to all customers, the average rating of the services rendered by workers in the shop was 5.5, with 7.0 being the highest score possible. That rating fell in the “very good” range.
- Just over 95 percent of the repairs to vehicles were completed within the time frame stated to customers.
- Income from the automotive repair shop increased 25 percent.

The negatives for the year were these:

- The customers’ overall rating of the mechanical aspects of cars sold by the dealership fell 25 percent—from 5.0 to 3.75, with 7.0 being the highest score possible.
- The average rating by customers for parts was only 3.4, with 7.0 being the highest score possible. This rating fell in the “poor” range.
- While income for the automotive repair shop increased, profit from the shop fell 20 percent. (Costs increased 40 percent.)
- Labor turnover within the shop continues to be a problem. This year the turnover rate was 60 percent. The average number of years a worker has been employed in this shop is 1.4 years. When workers were asked about their reasons for leaving, most gave “wages” as the main reason. Some indicated that they could make as much as $3 an hour more in other shops. Also, some (40 percent) indicated that the “working atmosphere” of other shops was much better.

1. If you were writing the report, what order (direct or indirect) would you use? Why?
2. Should the report be an informational or analytical report? Why?
3. Should the report be formal or informal? Should it be written in memo, letter, or manuscript style? Why?
4. Should the report be prepared in personal or impersonal writing style? Why?
Communication for Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

Alice Cleveland is an experienced flight attendant at an international airline. Three months ago, she was asked to head a company-wide committee related to passenger safety. She was very pleased to be asked to head the committee.

The company’s leaders are very much aware that when flight attendants give their government-required presentations, passengers are not paying attention. These talks explain the use of seat belts and oxygen masks and positions of exits of the airplanes. As a result, if an emergency were to arise, many passengers would not know what to do. Alice’s committee is to investigate the problem and make recommendations on how to get passengers to listen.

The committee’s research has been completed. Now Alice must report the committee’s findings to her supervisors—both orally and in a written report. She is nervous, but she knows her supervisors well and thinks that they will be supportive.

1. What type of report should Alice write to her supervisors? Should it be formal or informal? Should it be in memo, letter, or manuscript format?

2. If the report was directed to the company’s top management, would the type of Alice’s report change? If so, how?

3. Is the objective assigned to the committee easy to accomplish? Why or why not?
Chapter 9 Answers

Checkpoint 1

1. An informational report presents facts but includes very little analysis.
2. An analytical report analyzes a problem, presents facts and conclusions, and makes recommendations.

Checkpoint 2

1. Seven planning steps for creating a report are:
   a. Identify the problem or topic.
   b. Decide on areas to investigate.
   c. Determine the scope of the report.
   d. Plan ways to gather data.
   e. Collect the data.
   f. Develop a preliminary outline.
   g. Analyze the data, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.
2. Scope refers to the boundaries of the report—what will be included and what will not.

Checkpoint 3

1. Primary research involves gathering new data. Secondary research involves locating data that already have been gathered and reported.
2. Three methods that can be used to do primary research include interviews, surveys, and observations.
3. When using data from secondary sources, ask these questions to help evaluate the information you find:
   • Is the information relevant to the topic or problem?
   • Is the information true and accurate?
   • Is the information reliable? Is it provided by a reputable source?
   • Is the information current or useful?
   • Is the information biased?

Checkpoint 4
1. Five ways the outline for an informational report can be arranged include:
   • Chronological order
   • Order of importance
   • Logical sequence
   • Category
   • Geographical order
2. The outline for an analytical report can be arranged by hypotheses or by alternatives.
3. A discussion outline provides more information about the topics and the subtopics than a topical outline provides.

Checkpoint 5
1. Direct order should be used for a report when the report is routine (a weekly sales report, for example) or when the reader is expected to respond favorably.
2. Indirect order should be used for a report when you expect an unfavorable response or when the receiver may need persuasion to accept the main idea.

Checkpoint 6
1. Informal reports usually are written in a relatively personal style. Personal pronouns and contractions are often used in this style.
2. An impersonal writing style should be used if a report is about a serious problem or if it is going to a senior manager.
3. An impersonal writing style makes a report seem more objective than a personal writing style.

Checkpoint 7
1. Informal reports have three main parts: the opening, the body, and the closing.
2. For informal short reports written in direct order, the opening may include the following information:
   • The subject and purpose of the report (the reason the report is important)
   • Recommendations
   • A preview of the sections of the report
   • The summary of findings or the conclusions

Checkpoint 8
1. Formal reports, rather than informal reports, are used only when absolutely necessary because of the amount of time required to write formal reports.
2. Formal reports usually are written in an impersonal style because these reports need to sound impartial and professional.

Checkpoint 9
1. Preliminary report parts include a letter or memo of transmittal, a title page, a table of contents, and an executive summary. They are placed before the report body.
2. A bibliography and an appendix are supplementary parts that follow the report body.