

ENGL 2311 Project 3: Technical Report and Business Email

Technical Report and Business Email: Overview

In this assignment, you will write a technical report and a business email that introduces the report to its target audience. Technical reports define technical terms, summarize and explain complex information, and, in many cases, make recommendations based on the information in the report. Business emails are a key form of professional communication. **You will complete a five-part assignment sequence, for a score of up to 30 points = 30/30 =100%.**

The technical report for this assignment will be about a specific, “in real life” problem of your choosing -- either in your academic field/ major, your workplace, or your local neighborhood and/or hometown -- that you believe deserves more attention from a local organization that can possibly solve that problem.

Your report will define key terms, use researched data to detail the current status of the problem for different stakeholders (those affected by the problem), and make recommendations based on your analysis of technical information from at least one researched source. You will share your report and its recommendations with a key stakeholder via a business email that provides context, introduces key points in the report, and calls the recipient to action.

Assignment Goals

After completing this assignment, you will have gained the following skills:

- Defining and describing technical concepts and terms
- Summarizing and presenting technical data
- Organizing a technical report using sections
- Stating conclusions and making recommendations that connect with your technical analysis
- Writing professional email

Topic

Your topic is a specific, “in real life” problem of your choosing -- either in your academic field/ major, your workplace, or your local neighborhood and/or hometown -- that you believe deserves more attention from a local organization that can possibly solve that problem. **Narrow your topic to a specific time and location – preferably a time, location, and problem that you know well, either by personal experience or deep, intellectual interest.** That way, you will already know at least one or two stakeholders and what they believe to be right or wrong in approaching the problem.

Audience

Your audience is a member from a local, professional organization whom you believe can solve the problem – or at least is willing to consider your recommendations. You will need to research for who that contact person will be. He or she should have a strong background knowledge in the field, major, workplace, or geographic area of your chosen topic.

You should address your email by the contact person’s full name, who is a real person that anyone can contact in real life. For this assignment, you can pretend that you have worked with that person in the past but that you do not have a close relationship with him/her. That person will share your report with

the rest of his/her team/ department, decide on the recommendations in your report, and respond to you with the decision.

Assignment Format

Your technical report should be about 1200 - 2000 words and include the following elements:

1. **Title:** make it descriptive
2. **Executive Summary or Abstract:** brief summary of the entire report in half to one page.
3. **Introduction [Problem & Background]:** explanation of the background and current state of the problem, to help your reader understand the issue
4. **Methods:** an explanation of your research methods
5. **Findings/Data Analysis:** your data (given as figures in charts, images, and/or tables from your research), your analysis of the data, and your explanation of what the results are from your analysis.
6. **Conclusion and Recommendations:** A conclusion that pulls your explanation together and a recommendation of feasible solutions to solve the problem.
7. **References:** list of your researched sources, formatted in either MLA or APA style.

Your business email should be no more than 200 words. It should be addressed to your chosen contact person directly, be written in a professional tone and style, and contain the following elements:

1. Have a **descriptive Subject Title** that makes the purpose of the email clear.
2. In the body -- Indicate the **title of the report** and that the report is attached to the email.
3. In the body -- Give **key highlights in the report** that you want to make sure your chosen person sees.
4. In the body -- Have a **call to action** so that it is clear what you want from your chosen person and when you want it.
5. **Close with your name.** For example: "Sincerely, Susan Nguyen"

Student Models

(note: 1st three are all on the same general topic)

- [Tech Report 1](#)
- [Tech Report 2](#)
- [Tech Report 3](#)
- [Tech Report – Work Safety](#)
- [Tech Report – Recycling Bins](#)

Guides:

[“IMRD Reports \(Science, Lab, Technical\)”](#) ← for brainstorm, outline & first draft of technical report
[NISO’s “Scientific and Technical Reports – Preparation, Presentation, and Preservation” \(Excerpt\)](#) ← see especially pages 24-27 (section 5.2 Body Matter).
[Purdue OWL’s “Business Writing for Administrative and Clerical Staff”](#) ← for effective business emails

I. Technical Report: First Draft

This is the first assignment in the **Project 3 Technical Report and Business Email** assignment sequence. For this First Draft assignment, you will:

1. **Write a descriptive title and introduction.** Both the title and the introduction are likely to change as you do more research and determine your specific angle of analysis. That's okay! For now, your title and introduction can be about the broader issue of the topic.
2. **Outline the major sections of your report.** You will almost certainly have Executive Summary, Introduction, Methods, and Conclusions sections. You will likely have other sections such as Data Analysis, Findings, Recommendations, etc. You do not need to list subsections in your outline for this draft -- but doing so is a good idea.
3. **Draft the text for at least two additional sections of your report.** In addition to the Introduction, I recommend writing the Methods and Findings/Data Analysis sections at this point. Some people like to write the Executive Summary or Abstract at this stage, but many like to write those summaries AFTER writing the rest of the report. Whatever sections you choose, you should have at least two pages of text for this draft.
4. **Write a plan for the specific approach that you will take for this assignment.** Will you look at a specific neighborhood? A specific organization's policy? The relationship between the problem and the various stakeholders? This plan can change and can be very rough, but it should be substantial and specific enough for you to get useful feedback in your peer review.
5. **Turn in your assignment** in "Lessons/Assignments" in the course's Blackboard page and be ready to share your first draft with your peer reviewers.

Your first draft should be at least a couple of pages long and show that you have started to explore the data.

Grading Rubric for First Draft: Technical Report

Criteria	Points
Title and Introduction: Your first draft has a descriptive title and introduction.	1 pt
Outline of Sections: Your first draft outlines the sections that you plan to include.	1 pt
Drafted Sections: Your first draft has a substantial start (at least a few paragraphs) for at least two sections in addition to the introduction.	1 pt
Plan: Your first draft includes a section that explains your plan--your specific research angle--for your technical report	1 pt

Total: 4 Points

II. Technical Report: Peer Review

This assignment is part of the **Project 3 Technical Report and Business Email** assignment sequence. For this assignment, you will:

1. Actively participate in the peer review sessions for the first draft of the technical report.
2. Using the “**Grading Rubric for First Draft: Technical Report**,” provide feedback to your peers -- orally (if done in person) but ESPECIALLY as a written “Reply” to at least one classmate (your peer). You will share your feedback notes with your peers and also submit the feedback for this assignment (in the “Discussion Board”).
3. After the peer review sessions are complete, reflect on the peer review process by answering the following “**Post-Review Questions**”:
 - What was the most useful feedback that you received during the peer review process? How will you change your instructions based on that feedback?
 - What did you learn by talking with your peers about your first draft?
 - What did you do or say during the peer review process that you think helped your peers the most?
 - What would you change about how you give or receive feedback during another peer review?

What to turn in:

- Your peer review feedback for your peer’s first draft of the technical report in the “Discussion Board.”
- Your answers to the “**Post Review Questions**” in the “**Discussion Board**.”

Grading Rubric for Peer Review: Technical Report

Criteria	Points
Active participation: You actively participate in the peer review session(s).	2 pts
Reflection Questions: You responded thoughtfully to the questions about the peer review process.	3 pts

Total: 5 Points

III. Business Email: First Draft

This assignment is part of the **Project 3 Technical Report and Business Email** assignment sequence.

In this assignment, you will write a business email, using professional tone and style, to introduce your technical report to a specific audience: your chosen contact person in a local business, non-profit, or government organization. Your business email should be no more than 200 words. It should address the contact person's name directly, be written in a professional tone and style, and contain the following elements:

1. Have a **descriptive Subject Title** that makes the purpose of the email clear.
2. In the body -- Indicate the **title of the report** and that the report is attached to the email.
3. In the body -- Give **key highlights in the report** that you want to make sure your chosen person sees.
4. In the body -- Have a **call to action** so that it is clear what you want from your chosen person and when you want it.
5. **Close with your name.** For example: "Sincerely, Susan Nguyen"

Grading Rubric Business Email: First Draft

Criteria	Points
Subject Title: Your subject title makes clear the topic and the purpose of your email.	1 pt
Summary and Highlights: Your email summarizes and highlight key points from the report, tailored for the motivations and expertise of your audience.	1 pt
Call to Action: Your email makes it clear to the reader what you need them to do and when you need them to do it by.	1 pt

Total: 3 Points

IV. Technical Report and Business Email: Final Draft

This is the final draft assignment in the **Project 3 Technical Report and Business Email** assignment sequence. For this Final Draft assignment, you will:

1. **Make meaningful improvements** based on the feedback from the peer review sessions.
2. Ensure that your technical report and business email are in your own words and targeted at your specific audience (your named contact person from the named local organization).
3. Make sure that your technical report has the necessary sections: Title, Executive Summary or Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Findings/Data Analysis, Conclusion, Recommendations, and References.
4. Polish your technical report and business email to ensure a high quality final product, written with professional style and tone.
5. Make sure that you cite correctly your sources in a References section at the end of your technical report. See Purdue OWL for [MLA](#) and [APA](#) documentation info for online sources.
6. Submit your final draft of your technical report and your business email in our course's Blackboard **"Lessons/Assignments"** menu link. Make sure that you turn in **both documents (PDFs or DOCX file upload)**!

Grading Rubric for Final Draft: Technical Report and Business Email

Criteria	Points
Improvement: Your technical report final draft addresses comments from peer reviewers and shows significant improvement over the first draft.	2 pts
Audience Analysis: Your technical report uses appropriate vocabulary, is appropriately complex, and appropriately address the motivations of your audience. Your business email directly addresses your audience.	2 pts
Completion: Your technical report includes all necessary sections to be considered complete. Your business email includes all necessary information to be considered complete.	3 pts
Structure and Organization: Your technical report uses sections with clear headings (and possibly subheadings) to organize your content. The sections have the right type of content. For example, the Methods section does not list recommendations.	3 pts
Executive Summary: Your executive summary covers the most important aspects of your technical report for people who do not have time to read the whole report.	1 pts
Polish and Professionalism: You have made an effort to proofread your technical report and business email. They do not necessarily have to be perfect, but they should be much more polished than an early draft and use a professional style and tone.	3 pts

Total: 14 Points

V. Technical Report and Business Email: Reflection

This is the final assignment in the **Project 3 Technical Report and Business Email** assignment sequence -- and ***the last assignment of the class!*** For this assignment, reflect on your experience proposing, drafting, reviewing, and revising your summary by answering the following questions:

- What aspect of your Technical Report and Business Email assignment makes you the proudest, and why?
- What changed the most from your proposal and first draft to your final draft? How did peer reviews influence that change?
- What is one aspect of your Technical Report and Business Email assignment that you would still like to improve, and why? How would you go about doing that?
- What is one writing skill that you learned or improved while working on this assignment? What do you want to learn or improve next, and why?

Copy and paste the preceding questions into a document and write **at least 300 words** total for your responses to **all four questions**. Submit the document in “**Lessons/Assignments**”.

Grading Rubric: Reflection

Criteria	Points
Answering Questions: You answered all of the questions thoughtfully and explained how you grew as a writer, at least 300 words.	4 pts

Total: 4 Points