

# DOCUMENT SUPPLEMENTS LECTURE NOTES

A long document uses a particular format to help readers navigate the text. Often readers have time to read only a portion of your report; therefore, you need to help them find what they need through document supplements.

Reference the following handouts and overheads from my website as you go through these notes:

- **Checklist for 149 Recommendation Report** (under resources >revising, scoring, checklists)
- **Abstracts** (under class topics)
- **Table of Contents** (under class topics)
- **Documentation Examples** (under class topics)
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## ABSTRACTS OVERHEAD

Most readers will at least glance at your abstract. It may, in many cases, be the only part of your report they look at. Consequently, you want to make sure that you demonstrate your expertise and give readers a clear picture of what they will find in the report. The abstract must contain

- A complete thesis statement (topic, purpose, main point, support)
- Research methods used for the report (brief statement of the kinds of sources used)
- Overview of the contents (at least options, and criteria—discussion may overlap with the thesis statement somewhat)
- Definitions as needed—remember to take the reader’s needs into account.

The **Abstracts overhead** gives further details about placement, word count, and so on.

Keep in mind these points:

- Some sources do not recognize executive summaries and abstracts as separate documents
- A closing summary usually reiterates the main points, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations. You may choose to divide these tasks into separate sections, or they may overlap in one section. Either way, make sure you include an **explicit action** for your reader to take: not “We recommend the Dodge 1500,” but “We recommend that you buy the Dodge 1500.”
- A summary always consists of complete sentences, but it may also use some bullets for lists.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS OVERHEAD

A table of contents also functions as an overview. Check to make sure your table of contents uses key words (not just “Introduction” but “Introduction to a PDA Evaluation”). Also make sure Tables of Contents for this class have leader lines (the dots connecting the page numbers and the headings).

## DOCUMENTATION EXAMPLES OVERHEAD

You will use the APA format for documenting your sources. APA format emphasizes the currency of the research rather than the wording of passages.

### Document your sources in two places:

1. in the text wherever you borrow someone else's words or ideas
2. in the reference list at the end of the document.

Your **textbook appendix** gives specific, detailed directions for constructing various types of citations using APA format:

Note in particular the following:

- APA end citations indent after the first line
- Citations appear in alphabetical order
- APA uses the word References instead of Works Cited

Keep in mind these points:

- We rarely use direct quotes in tech writing. Tech writing prefers a summary of ideas and consequently uses much more paraphrase.
- For this class you will need **to annotate your sources**: see the box on the last page of the recommendation report checklist for directions.
- Normally APA format does not require end citations for interviews. However, I want to see your complete research list in one place (References). Therefore, **for interviews only, please follow MLA format** (directions in textbook appendix).

## Important Reminders

Remember to reread the following handouts (on line) before submitting any document to me. I use all of the following when I grade your papers:

- Checklist for Review
- Common Mechanics Issues in Tech Writing (English 148) or Engineering Writing Tips (149)
- Assignment Corrections
- Comments on Assignment Corrections
- Assignment Descriptions
- Trade and Grade

Also, reread the textbook and your notes on writing style. Where my instructions differ from theirs, go with mine. Document structure varies a little from company to company and using my review checklists will give you practice in using a company style guide.

**NOTE:** If you'd like to see sample reports, come by my office.