

Report Types: Top 8 Types of Reports

This article throws light upon the top eight types of report. The types are:

1. **Formal or Informal Reports**
2. **Short or Long Reports**
3. **Informational or Analytical Reports**
4. **Proposal Report**
5. **Vertical or Lateral Reports**
6. **Internal or External Reports**
7. **Periodic Reports**
8. **Functional Reports.**

Type # 1. Formal or Informal Reports:

Formal reports are carefully structured; they stress objectivity and organization, contain much detail, and are written in a style that tends to eliminate such elements as personal pronouns. Informal reports are usually short messages with natural, casual use of language. The internal memorandum can generally be described as an informal report.

Type # 2. Short or Long Reports:

This is a confusing classification. A one-page memorandum is obviously short, and a twenty page report is clearly long. But where is the dividing line? Bear in mind that as a report becomes longer (or what you determine as long), it takes on more characteristics of formal reports.

Type # 3. Informational or Analytical Reports:

Informational reports (annual reports, monthly financial reports, and reports on personnel absenteeism) carry objective information from one area of an organization to another. Analytical reports (scientific research, feasibility reports, and real-estate appraisals) present attempts to solve problems.

Type # 4. Proposal Report:

The proposal is a variation of problem-solving reports. A proposal is a document prepared to describe how one organization can meet the needs of another. Most governmental agencies advertise their needs by issuing "requests for proposal" or RFPs. The RFP specifies a need and potential suppliers prepare proposal reports telling how they can meet that need.

Type # 5. Vertical or Lateral Reports:

This classification refers to the direction a report travels. Reports that move upward or downward the hierarchy are referred to as vertical reports; such reports contribute to management control. Lateral reports, on the other hand, assist in coordination in the organization. A report traveling between units of the same organization level (production and finance departments) is lateral.

Type # 6. Internal or External Reports:

Internal reports travel within the organization. External reports, such as annual reports of companies, are prepared for distribution outside the organization.

Type # 7. Periodic Reports:

Periodic reports are issued on regularly scheduled dates. They are generally upward directed and serve management control. Preprinted forms and computer-generated data contribute to uniformity of periodic reports.

Type # 8. Functional Reports:

This classification includes accounting reports, marketing reports, financial reports, and a variety of other reports that take their designation from the ultimate use of the report. Almost all reports could be included in most of these categories. And a single report could be included in several classifications.

Although authorities have not agreed on a universal report classification, these report categories are in common use and provide a nomenclature for the study (and use) of reports. Reports are also classified on the basis of their format. As you read the classification structure described below, bear in mind that it overlaps with the classification pattern described above

Preprinted Form:

Basically for “**fill in the blank**” reports. Most are relatively short (five or fewer pages) and deal with routine information, mainly numerical information. Use this format when it is requested by the person authorizing the report.

ii. Letter:

Common for reports of five or fewer pages that are directed to outsiders. These reports include all the normal parts of a letter, but they may also have headings, footnotes, tables, and figures. Personal pronouns are used in this type of report.

iii. Memo:

Common for short (fewer than ten pages) informal reports distributed within an organization. The memo format of “Date,” “To,” “From,” and “Subject” is used. Like

longer reports, they often have internal headings and sometimes have visual aids. Memos exceeding ten pages are sometimes referred to as memo reports to distinguish them from shorter ones.

iv. Manuscript:

Common for reports that run from a few pages to several hundred pages and require a formal approach. As their length increases, reports in manuscript format require more elements before and after the text of the report. Now that we have surveyed the different types of reports and become familiar with the nomenclature, let us move on to the actual process of writing the report.