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Journal Title: The Norton field guide to writing with readings and handbook , Richard Bullock, Wright State University, Maureen Daly Goggin, Arizona State University, Francine Weinberg

Volume: Issue:
Month/Year: 2019**Pages:**

Article Author: Bullock, Richard et al.

Article Title: Writing in Academic Fields of Study

Imprint:

ILL Number: -16722726



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FIFTH EDITION

The Norton Field Guide to Writing

with readings and handbook

Richard Bullock

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Maureen Daly Goggin

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Francine Weinberg



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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bullock, Richard H. (Richard Harvey) author. | Goggin, Maureen Daly, author. | Weinberg, Francine, author.

Title: The Norton Field Guide to writing with readings and handbook / Richard Bullock, Wright State University, Maureen Daly Goggin, Arizona State University, Francine Weinberg.

Description: Fifth edition. | New York ; London : W. W. Norton & Company, [2019] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018007983 | ISBN 9780393655803 (paperback)

Subjects: LCSH: English language—Rhetoric—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | English language—Grammar—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | Report writing—Handbooks, manuals, etc. | College readers.

Classification: LCC PE1408 .B883825 2019 | DDC 808/.042—dc23 LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018007983>

W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10110
wwnorton.com

W. W. Norton & Company Ltd., 15 Carlisle St., London W1D 3BS

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Preface

The Norton Field Guide to Writing began as an attempt to offer the kind of writing guides found in the best rhetorics in a format as user-friendly as the best handbooks, and on top of that, to be as brief as could be. We wanted to create a handy guide to help college students with all their written work. Just as there are field guides for bird watchers, for gardeners, and for accountants, this would be one for writers. In its first four editions, the book has obviously touched a chord with many writing instructors, and it remains the best-selling college rhetoric—a success that leaves us humbled and grateful. Student success is now on everyone's mind. As teachers, we want our students to succeed, and first-year writing courses offer one of the best opportunities to help them develop the skills and habits of mind they need to succeed, whatever their goals may be. Success, though, doesn't end with first-year writing; students need to transfer their knowledge and skills to other courses and other writing tasks. To that end, we've added new chapters on reading and writing across fields of study and new guidance on writing literature reviews. We've also added "Taking Stock" questions to each Genre chapter to help students develop their metacognitive abilities by reflecting on their work.

The Norton Field Guide still aims to offer both the guidance new teachers and first-year writers need and the flexibility many experienced teachers want. In our own teaching we've seen how well explicit guides to writing work for students and novice teachers. But too often, writing textbooks provide far more information than students need or instructors can assign and as a result are bigger and more expensive than they should be. So we've tried to provide enough structure without too much detail—to give the information college writers need to know while resisting the temptation to tell them everything there is to know.

Most of all, we've tried to make the book easy to use, with menus, directories, a glossary/index, and color-coded links to help students find what they're looking for. The links are also the way we keep the book brief: chapters are short, but the links send students to pages elsewhere in the book if they need more detail.



Writing in Academic Fields of Study 26

In a *literature* course, you're asked to write an analysis of a short story. In a *biology* course, you must complete several lab reports. In a *management* course, you may create a detailed business plan. In fact, just about every course you take in college will require writing, so to write successfully, you must understand the rhetorical situation of your writing in every course and discipline—to write as if you're an insider, a member of the discipline, even if you're just learning the ropes. This chapter offers help in determining the general expectations of writing done in various academic fields of study.

Considering the Rhetorical Situation

To write in academic fields, you need to use the same processes and strategies you're asked to use in your writing classes, including analyzing the **RHETORICAL SITUATION** in which you're writing. These questions can help:

PURPOSE

Why do people in this discipline write? To share scholarship and research findings? persuade? teach or provide guidance? show learning or mastery? track progress? propose solutions or plans of action? explore ideas or the self? earn grants or other rewards? something else?

53

55–56



57–60

AUDIENCE

To whom do people in this discipline write? To colleagues and other scholars? students? managers? employees? customers? clients? granting agencies? the public? others? What do they already know about the discipline and the topic? What specialized terms or concepts do they understand, and which need to be defined or explained? How much evidence or support is required, and what kinds (empirical data, research findings, logical analysis, personal testimony, something else) will they accept?

61–65

GENRE

What genres—reports, analyses, arguments, instructions, case studies, résumés, to name only a few—are typically used in this discipline? Are they organized in a certain way, and do they contain specific kinds of information? How much flexibility or room for innovation and creativity is allowed? What counts as evidence or support for assertions, and how is it cited (in citations in the text, in footnotes, in a works-cited page, informally in the text, or in some other way)?

66–68

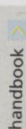
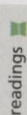
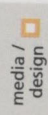
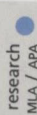
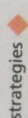
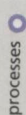
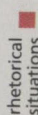
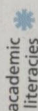
STANCE

What attitude is considered appropriate in this discipline? Objective? Unemotional? Critical? Passionate? Should you write as a good student showing what you can do? an instructor of others? an advocate for a position? someone exploring an idea? something else? Does the discipline require a certain tone? formal or informal language? Can you include your personal perspective and write using “I”? Should you write only in the third person and use passive voice?

69–71

MEDIA/DESIGN

What media are typically used in this discipline? Print? Spoken? Electronic? A combination? Are certain design elements expected? to be avoided? Are visuals commonly used? What kinds—charts, graphs, photos, drawings, video or audio clips, or something else? In which genres? How much design freedom do you have?





WRITING IN ACADEMIC FIELDS OF STUDY

Generalizing about the requirements of writing in academic disciplines is tricky; what constitutes a discipline is sometimes unclear, and universities group academic fields together in various ways. For example, in some universities psychology is considered a science, while in others it's a social science. Economics is sometimes part of a college of business administration, sometimes in a college of arts and sciences. In addition, the writing required in, say, history, differs from that required in English literature, though both are considered parts of the humanities.

Furthermore, certain genres of writing, like *case studies* and *research reports*, can share the same name but have very different organizational structures and content, depending on the discipline in which they are used. For example, research reports in psychology and the natural sciences include a review of relevant scholarly literature in the introduction; in reports in sociology and other social sciences, the literature review is a separate section. A case study in business identifies a problem or issue in an organization; provides background information; includes a section, "Alternatives," that discusses possible solutions to the problem and why they were rejected; outlines and argues for a proposed solution; and proposes specific strategies for achieving the proposed solution. A case study in nursing, on the other hand, includes three sections: patient status, an overview of the patient's condition and treatment; the nurse's assessment of the patient's symptoms and their possible causes; and a plan for helping the patient improve. The guide below offers general advice on how to write in broad academic disciplines, but as the differences between two disciplines' expectations for case studies show, it's always a good idea to ask each of your professors for guidance on writing for their particular fields.

WRITING IN THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

The arts and humanities focus on human culture and the expressions of the human mind, and the purpose of writing in these fields is to explore and analyze aspects of the human experience across time and sometimes



to create original works of literature, music, and art. The methods used in these disciplines include careful reading, critical analysis, historical research, interpretation, questioning, synthesis, and imitation. Courses in the arts and humanities typically include fine arts, architecture, music, dance, theater, film, photography, literature, history, classical and modern languages, linguistics, and philosophy.

Writing in the arts and humanities is generally done for a broad audience that includes professors and scholars, other students, the general public, and oneself. Genres may include **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES**, **ANALYSES**, **ARGUMENTS**, essays, **EVALUATIONS**, **JOURNALS**, personal narratives, **REPORTS**, **PRESENTATIONS**, **PROPOSALS**, **REFLECTIONS**, and **LITERATURE REVIEWS**, as well as fiction and poetry. Support is often based on textual and observational evidence and personal insight, though in some fields empirical evidence and data are also valued. Writers in the arts and humanities tend to use modifiers to acknowledge that their insights and conclusions are interpretive, not definitive. Documentation is usually done in **MLA** or *Chicago* style. Elements of style favored in writing in the arts and humanities may include the use of "I"; the active voice; an informal vocabulary, if appropriate; and vivid language.

A Sample of Writing in History: A Researched Essay

Identifies a problem in current understanding of a historical event.

Offers a narrative of a past event.

Demonstrates familiarity with relevant sources.

The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 was one of the most significant yet misrepresented events in the history of American Indians. After three generations of being oppressed by Spanish rule, the Pueblo Indians throughout the southwest region of North America banded together, organizing a widespread rebellion in the blistering summer heat of 1680 and successfully liberating themselves from their oppressors by springtime. When examining the causes of the revolt, the lack of authentic Pueblo voices within the written records challenges the validity of the available sources and makes one wonder if we will ever know what went on through the eyes of the Pueblo. Although in

academic
literacies

rhetorical
situations

genres

fields

processes

strategies

research
MLA / APA

media /
design

readings

handbook



the traditional narrative, the Spaniards are regarded as missionaries sent by God to “save” the “barbaric” Pueblos, the event, if seen from the Pueblo perspective, can be understood as a violent retaliation by the Pueblo against the Spanish oppression. The Pueblo uprisings, from burning down churches to the violent deaths of Catholic friars, reveal spiritual abuse as the major cause of the revolt. Moreover, without texts written by the Pueblo, their architecture and spatial organization provide valuable insight into the causes of the revolt era and help to overcome the veneer of Spanish colonialism.

Offers a strong thesis.

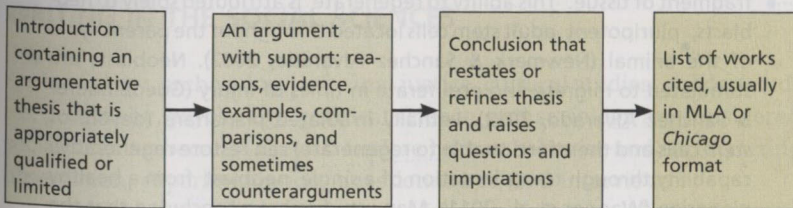
Clear, engaging writing style.

Adapted from “Letting the Unspoken Speak: A Reexamination of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680,” by E. McHugh, April 2015, *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History* 5, no. 1, <https://www.armstrong.edu/history-journal/history-journal-letting-the-unspoken-speak-a-reexamination-of-the-pueblo-re>.

Sources in essay cited in Chicago format.

Typical Organization of Arts and Humanities Essays

Typical essays in the arts and humanities include these elements:



WRITING IN SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

The sciences include biology, chemistry, geology, earth sciences, and physics. Mathematics may include statistics and logic as well. All these fields aim to increase our knowledge of the physical and natural world and its phenomena through observation, experiment, logic, and computation.



185–89

198–201

131–56

157–84

246–55

APA 597–636

Scientists and mathematicians typically write **ABSTRACTS**, **LITERATURE REVIEWS**, **REPORTS**, **ARGUMENTS**, poster presentations, **PROPOSALS**, and lab reports for audiences that may include other researchers, granting agencies, teachers, students, and the general public. Support in the sciences most often consists of repeatable empirical evidence; in mathematics, careful reasoning and the posing and solving of problems; in both, careful attention to the work of previous researchers. The writing in these fields focuses on the subject of the study, not the researcher, so most often the passive voice is used. Source material is paraphrased and summarized and cited in CSE or **APA** style.

A Sample of Scientific Writing: A Scientific Proposal in Biology

Careful reference to previous sentence.

Specialized disciplinary vocabulary.

Sources paraphrased and summarized.

Planarians, flatworms widely known for their incredible regenerative capabilities, are able to restore an entire organism from even a small fragment of tissue. This ability to regenerate is attributed solely to neoblasts, pluripotent adult stem cells located throughout the parenchyma of the animal (Newmark & Sanchez Alvarado, 2002). Neoblasts are stimulated to migrate and proliferate in times of injury (Guedelhofer & Sanchez Alvarado, 2012). Lethally irradiated planarians (devoid of stem cells and therefore unable to regenerate) can restore regenerative capability through transplantation of a single neoblast from a healthy planarian (Wagner et al., 2011). Many studies have concluded that the population of neoblasts is not homogenous (Scimone et al., 2014), and there are different responses to different injury types. Wenemoser and Reddien (2012) observed a body-wide increase in mitotic activity, such as cell division and migration, with any injury.

Third person, passive voice.

Adapted from "Identifying Genes Involved in Suppression of Tumor Formation in the Planarian *Schmidtea mediterranea*," by E. Dorsten, 2015, Best Integrated Writing, 2, <https://corescholar.libraries.wright.edu/biw/vol2/iss1/6/>

academic literacies

rhetorical situations

genres

fields

processes

strategies

research
MLA / APA

media / design

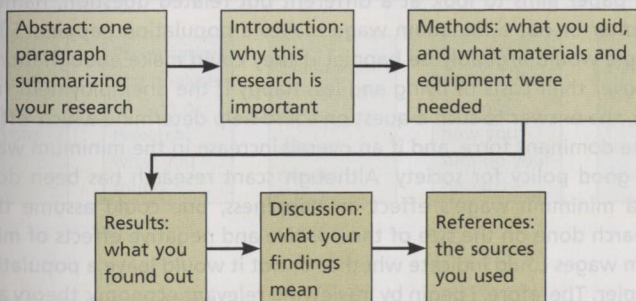
readings

handbook



Typical Organization of Research Reports in the Sciences

Typical reports in the sciences include elements that follow the IMRaD structure: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. They also include an abstract and list of references.



WRITING IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Anthropology, archaeology, criminal justice, cultural studies, gender studies, geography, psychology, political science, and sociology are considered social sciences because they all explore human behavior and society using observation, experimentation, questionnaires, and interviews.

Social scientists typically write for fellow scholars, teachers, students, and the general public. They may write in several genres: **ABSTRACTS**, **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES**, **ANALYSES**, **ARGUMENTS**, case studies, ethnographies, **LITERATURE OR RESEARCH REVIEWS**, **REPORTS**, **SUMMARIES**, and **PRESENTATIONS**. Claims are typically supported by empirical evidence, fieldwork done in natural settings, observation, and interviews. Writers in these fields strive for an objective tone, often using the passive voice. Sources may be cited in **APA** or *Chicago* style.

▲	185–89
	190–98
	98–130
	157–84
	198–201
	131–56
✱	33–34
◻	673–84



A Sample of Writing in the Social Sciences: A Research Report

Traditional economic theory states that a minimum wage above the marginal product of labor will lead to increased unemployment. . . . This paper aims to look at a different but related question, namely, whether or not a minimum wage makes a population happier. Since people would arguably be happier if they could make enough money to cover their costs of living and less happy if the unemployment rate rose, the answer to such a question could help determine which effect is the dominant force and if an overall increase in the minimum wage is a good policy for society. Although scant research has been done on a minimum wage's effect on happiness, one could assume that research done on the size of the positive and negative effects of minimum wages could indicate whether or not it would leave a population happier. Therefore, I begin by reviewing relevant economic theory and research on the effects of a minimum wage increase to provide background information and describe what related questions have been approached and answered. I then describe the data and method used to answer this question, followed by the interpretation of such results as well as the implications.

Objective tone.

Research question.

Specialized language.

Literature review.

Empirical method.

Analysis and evaluation of results.

Adapted from "The Effect of Minimum Wages on Happiness," by J. Nizamoff, *Beyond Politics* 2014, pp. 85–94, <https://beyondpolitics.nd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/2013-14-Full-Journal.pdf>

Typical Organization of a Research Report in the Social Sciences

Typical research reports in social science courses might include the following elements, though the order and names of the elements may differ from discipline to discipline. For example, in psychology, the literature review is part of the introduction, not a separate section as shown here.

academic literacies

rhetorical situations

genres

fields

processes

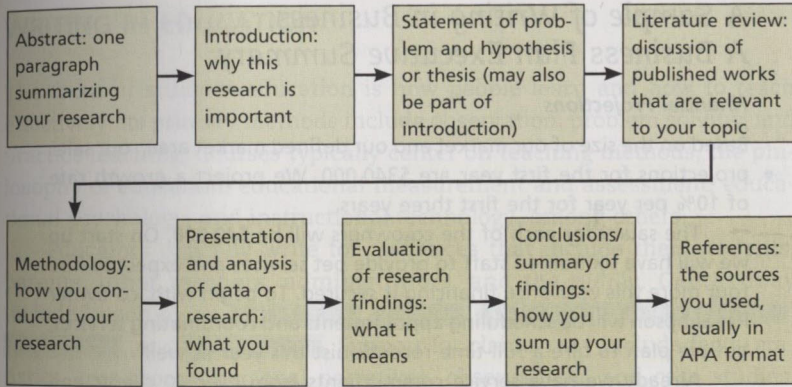
strategies

research
MLA / APA

media / design

readings

handbook



WRITING IN BUSINESS

The focus of the academic discipline of business is business-management principles and their application, and the purpose of writing in business is often to cause readers to make a decision and then act on it. The primary methods used include problem solving, planning, and experiential learning, or learning by doing. Courses typically taught include finance, economics, human resources, marketing, operations management, and accounting.

The audiences for writing in business typically include colleagues, employees in other departments, supervisors, managers, clients, customers, and other stakeholders—often several at the same time as a text moves through an organization. Genres may include memos, emails, letters, case studies, executive summaries, **RÉSUMÉS**, business plans, **REPORTS**, and **ANALYSES**. Support usually takes the form of facts and figures, examples, narratives, and expert testimony, and documentation is usually done in **APA** or Chicago style. Elements of style favored in business writing include these features: the main point is presented early; the language used is simple, direct, and positive; and the active voice is used in most cases.

▲ 264–79

131–56

98–130

● APA 597–636



A Sample of Writing in Business: A Business Plan Executive Summary:

Financial Projections

Precise numbers,
confidently
stated.

Clear, direct
writing, free
of jargon and
hedging.

Positive tone.

Based on the size of our market and our defined market area, our sales projections for the first year are \$340,000. We project a growth rate of 10% per year for the first three years.

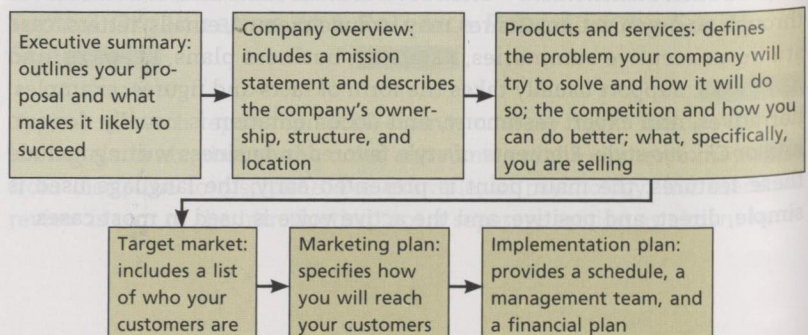
The salary for each of the co-owners will be \$40,000. On start up we will have six trained staff to provide pet services and expect to hire four more this year once financing is secured. To begin with, co-owner Pat Simpson will be scheduling appointments and coordinating services, but we plan to hire a full-time receptionist this year as well.

Already we have service commitments from over 40 clients and plan to aggressively build our client base through newspaper, website, social media, and direct mail advertising. The loving on-site professional care that Pet Grandma will provide is sure to appeal to cat and dog owners throughout the West Vancouver area.

Adapted from "Business Plan Executive Summary Sample," by S. Ward, March 29, 2017, The Balance, <https://thebalance.com/business-plan-executive-summary-example-2948007>

Typical Organization of Business Plans

A common assignment in business courses is a business plan. Business plans typically include these sections:





WRITING IN EDUCATION

The focus of study in education is how people learn and how to teach effectively. Its primary methods include observation, problem solving, and practice teaching. Courses typically center on teaching methods, the philosophy of education, educational measurement and assessment, educational psychology, and instructional technology, among others.

Educators typically write for audiences that include their students, parents, other teachers, administrators, and the public. Genres may include lesson plans, **SUMMARIES**, **REPORTS**, **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES**, **PORTFOLIOS**, and **REFLECTIONS**. Support for claims may include facts, statistics, test scores, personal narratives, observations, and case studies. Sources are documented in **APA** style. Clarity and correctness are important in writing in education; “I” may be used in reflective writing and informal communication, while in formal writing the third person is preferred.

✱	33–34
▲	131–56
	190–98
●	361–70
▲	256–63
●	APA 600–604

A Sample of Writing in Education: A Teaching Philosophy Statement

My Image of the Child: ●

I believe that the student should be at the center of the instructional process. I have an image of children as strong and capable beings. The classroom is a place where the teacher serves as a facilitator and guide as the students construct their own understanding of the world around them. Although it is the teacher’s role to plan lessons and evaluate students’ progress, it is of the utmost importance to always take the children and their own unique needs into consideration. For my second field experience, I was placed at Margaret Manson Elementary. Their school motto is that “the children come first.” When children are the priority in teaching, an amazing amount of learning can take place. I believe in creating opportunities for students to develop to their fullest potential while developing and expanding their horizons and worldviews. In order to accomplish this, there must be a welcoming, positive environment that is open and honest. When students feel comfortable

Sections labeled with headings.

Argument is constructed to show teaching priorities.

As a reflective piece, “I” is appropriate.

Writing carefully crafted and proofread.



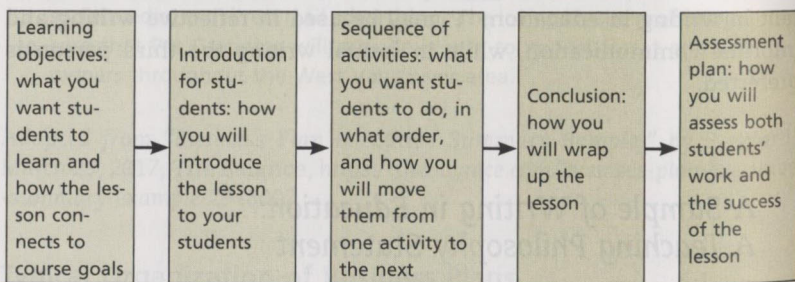
Discusses both teaching and personal qualities.

at school they will surely be more engaged and responsive to class activities. I also consider it essential to be **passionate and enthusiastic** about learning so that the students can have a most relevant and meaningful experience.

Adapted from "Statement of Teaching Philosophy," by K. Tams (n.d.), Kelly Tams' Teaching Portfolio, <http://tams.yolasite.com/my-philosophy-of-education.php>

Typical Organization of Lesson Plans in Education

Frequent assignments in education courses are lesson plans, which typically include these elements:



WRITING IN ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

In the fields of engineering and technology, the focus is how to create and maintain useful structures, systems, processes, and machines. Engineers and technicians define problems as well as solve them, weigh various alternatives, and test possible solutions before presenting them to clients. This is a broad set of disciplines that may include civil, computer, electrical, mechanical, and structural engineering; computer science; and various technology specialties such as HVAC and automotive technology.



Engineers and technicians typically write for their peers and team members, their clients, and the public. Writing tasks may include **ABSTRACTS**, **EVALUATIONS**, instructions, **LITERATURE REVIEWS**, memos, **PROPOSALS**, **REPORTS**, and **SUMMARIES**. Support usually includes data, examples, mathematical and logical reasoning, and experimental results, and sources are usually cited in **APA** format. Engineers and technicians value writing that includes logical ordering of ideas and precise language. Tables, charts, figures, illustrations, and headings and subheadings within the writing—all ways of quickly and efficiently getting information—are also valued.

▲	185–89
	202–10
	198–201
	246–55
	131–56
✱	33–34
●	APA 597–636

A Sample of Writing in Engineering: A Research Report

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS ●

To begin testing, an ATV test bed was designed (fig. 1). To secure the machine, a loose rope was attached to the front of the machine and then to the testing platform. An additional rope was then attached at a 90° angle to the front of the machine to act as the lifting force. The test bed platform could be raised to a maximum of 60°, which simulated hills or steep terrain. Each test was started at 0° and then increased by increments of 10 (angles were determined by a digital level attached to platform). Once the machine was at the appropriate angle, a lift force was applied to observe turnover weight. Once the machine's tires lifted off of the platform, the scale was read to determine the amount of weight. Each machine was tested from rear and side to side.

Headings used.

Charts, graphs, and photos included.

Precise description of procedure.

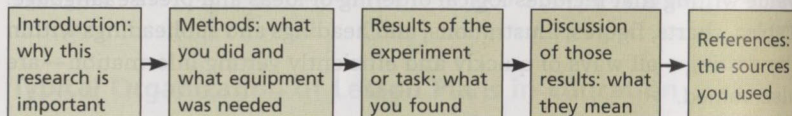
Technical language used for precision.

Adapted from "Analysis of All Terrain Vehicle Crash Mechanisms," by S. Tanner, M. Aitken, and J. N. Warnock, 2008–10, *Journal of Undergraduate Research in Bioengineering*, <https://www.uweb.engr.washington.edu/education/pdf/tanner.pdf>



Typical Organization of Lab Reports in Engineering

Lab reports, a typical assignment in engineering classes, usually include the IMRaD elements, along with an abstract and a list of references. This format may vary depending on the engineering field and the requirements of the experiment or task.



WRITING IN HEALTH SCIENCES AND NURSING

Health sciences and nursing is a broad set of fields that may include nursing, anatomy, physiology, nutrition, and pharmacology as well as athletic training, exercise science, physical or occupational therapy, and speech pathology. Consequently, the methods used are also broad and varied, and they may include study of theories and techniques, observation, role-playing, and experiential learning.

Writing in these fields may include **ABSTRACTS**, **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHIES**, **ARGUMENTS**, case studies, instructions, personal narratives, **REPORTS**, **REFLECTIONS**, **REVIEWS**, **SUMMARIES**, and charts **DESCRIBING** patients' conditions and care. The audiences for this writing may include other patient care providers, clinic and hospital administrators and staff, insurance companies, and patients or clients. Support for assertions typically includes scholarly research, observation, and description, and high value is placed on accurate information and detail. Other aspects of this writing include a preference for writing in the third person, paraphrased source information, and the use of headings and subheadings. Sources are usually cited in **APA** format.

185–89 ▲

190–98

157–84

131–56

256–63

198–201

33–34 ★

443–51 ◆

APA 597–636 ●



A Sample of Writing in Nursing: A Case Study

Patient
Status.

Ms. D is a morbidly obese 67 year old female, 240 lbs, 5'2" with type II diabetes mellitus. She was transferred from a nursing home to the hospital for pneumonia, but also suffers from congestive heart disease, sleep apnea, psoriasis, and osteoarthritis. She has a weak but productive cough with tonsil suction, and she was on breathing treatments with albuterol. Her skin is very dry and thin with several lesions and yeast infections, and the deep folds of her lower abdomen bled during the bed bath. She did not want to wear her breathing mask at night and refused to get out of bed. She cried when encouraged to use the bathroom or to move her legs. She expressed great fear of returning to the nursing home.

From the outset, we realized that Ms. D needed care beyond physical therapy and treatment for pneumonia; we realized that her obesity and refusal to participate in her health care expressed important patterns of her life. Morbid obesity does not happen overnight; it is a progressive pattern associated with activity levels, diet, and self-care practices, as well as other possible physiological and psychosocial dimensions. Johnson's (1980) Behavioral System Model, which outlines seven behavioral subsystems, was helpful in providing a perspective of the complexity of Ms. D's health needs. We also assessed that Ms. D lacked confidence in taking care of herself (reflecting the *achievement subsystem*) and lacked a sense of family support from her two sons (*affiliative subsystem*). Her fear of returning to the nursing home coupled with her need for ongoing care challenged her sense of interdependency as addressed in Johnson's *dependency subsystem*.

Careful description of patient's condition.

Detailed observation using precise terms.

Behavior as well as medical conditions taken into account.

Patient Assessment.

Use of paraphrased scholarly source to aid assessment.

Adapted from "Esthetic Knowing with a Hospitalized Morbidly Obese Patient," by R. Brinkley, K. Ricker, and K. Tuomey, Fall 2007, *Journal of Undergraduate Nursing Scholarship*, 9, no. 1, <http://www.juns.nursing.arizona.edu/articles/Fall%202007/Esthetic%20knowing.htm>



Typical Organization of Case Studies in Health Sciences and Nursing

Case studies, typical assignments in these fields, usually include the following elements:

