

Writing the final report

**Some tips to get you through the
panic of a major group project**

Basic writing

- **Understand your audience**
- **Determine the purpose**
- **Be organized**
- **Be accurate and complete**
- **No mechanical mistakes**

Tips for team writing

(Adapted from Wilbers Star Tribune column, Nov. 30, 2001)

- **Appoint an editor**
- **Agree on audience and purpose**
- **Organize material**
- **Assign writing tasks**
- **Determine section lengths**
- **Establish style guidelines**
- **Deadlines for rough drafts, final copy**

Style guide sample

- Text size is 12 pt Times New Roman.
- Line spacing is 24 pt (to meet 3 lines per vertical inch requirement).
- Paragraphs start with indentation and no blank line.
- Margins are 1 inch all around.
- Page numbers are at bottom where the "XX" will change for each section. Each section starts at a new page 1.
- Main heading (project title): 14 point bold, Arial/Helvetica font. Sub-headings: 12 point bold italic, Arial/Helvetica font.
- References and citations are APA style APA in-text citations are (Durfee, 1990; Axelson, 1998) and so on. For more, see Hacker, "A Writer's Reference", or http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html
- Each section ends with its own reference list, the idea is to keep sections as independent as possible.
- MS word document template. Download and use if you wish (MS Word doc, 20kB)

ME4054 report

- **The archival record of your project**
- **Follow web instructions for content**
- **Don't forget**
 - **Cost analysis**
 - **Dfe analysis**
 - **Regulatory analysis**
- **Document prototype testing**
- **Use proper citation technique**

Report logistics

- **CD format (see instructions for details)**
 - One to advisor
 - One to course sec'y (or to Hendru)
- **One B&W hard copy for use at the Design Show**
- **Flyer**
- **Executive summary**

Need help?

- **The Student Writing Center**
 - walk-in, one-on one clinic. Bring you and a writing sample.
- **The Online Writing Center**
 - offers tutoring via email and specializes in technical writing.
- **The General College Writing Center**
 - walk in clinic for University of Minnesota student.

Everybody's business: Adopt a persona for persuasive advantage

Stephen Wilbers

Published April 11, 2003

Writing is power. When we write, we declare our concerns, our values, our viewpoints.

When we give written expression to our thoughts -- when we use these little symbolic squiggles known as letters and punctuation marks to convey our meaning -- we create an artifact. We leave a record. We make history.

With this power comes both responsibility and freedom.

When we write to inform or to persuade -- though not necessarily when we write to entertain -- we have certain responsibilities. We are expected to be honest about our intent, clear in our expression, accurate with our information and respectful toward our readers.

Everybody's business: Test your ability to find common errors

Published April 4, 2003

The longer I teach writing, the more convinced I become that writers tend to make the same errors repeatedly. If they learned to avoid those errors, they would improve their writing exponentially.

So when I devised a copy-editing exam for graduate students in the University of Minnesota's Management of Technology program, I concentrated on those errors -- errors such as lack of subject-verb agreement, nonparallel structure, dangling modifiers, missing or unnecessary commas and apostrophes and commonly misspelled words such as *lead* for *led*.

To help my students prepare, I encouraged them to go to my Web page at www.wilbers.com and review a 30-point exam I had given to M.B.A. students the previous semester. You might want to do the same before you take a shortened version of the exam.

Ready?

Correct the 15 errors in the following paragraphs:

