

Writing an Executive Summary

1. An **executive summary** summarizes, or reviews, the main points of a longer document or report for a reader who does not have time to read the entire report.
 - a. An effective executive summary **analyzes and summarizes** the most important points in the paper or report, and will often make **recommendations** based on the analysis.
2. Executive summaries are “stand alone” documents that are almost always read *instead of* the full reports they summarize. Executive summaries are often read by executives who most likely do not have the time to read the full original.
 - a. Paragraphs should be short and concise.
 - b. Executive summaries should make sense even to the reader who has not read the original report.
 - c. Executive summaries should be written in language that is appropriate for the target audience (try not to use jargon)
3. Executive Summaries should briefly cover every main section of the full report.

When preparing to write an executive summary, ask yourself the following questions:

- Who will read your executive summary?
- What is the main document’s main topic, theme, or idea?
- What is the purpose of the main document?
- Does the document make a recommendation or suggest a certain course of action?
- What are the benefits or consequences of this course of action?

Special Notes:

*Executive summaries demand special attention. The first sentence should grab and keep the attention of the reader.

*As noted in the syllabus, the layout, organization and structure are up to you.