

Final Report : Outline

Many companies, organizations, and classes furnish style and report guidelines that writers must follow. In EDC, your final report should include the following elements:

- Cover and binding
To look professional, your report should have a cover and binding (preferably spiral, but Velo is acceptable).
- Title page
The title page should include:
 - Full title of report
 - Names of team members in alphabetical order, and team and section number
 - Date of document (the final presentation date)
 - Name of the organization for which the team works (Istanbul Technical University, Mechanical Engineering Department) and the names of your instructors
 - Professional-looking, easy-to-read fonts and basic colors. (Avoid fancy fonts and colors.)
- Front matter
The “front matter” of a report refers to those pages that follow the title page and are numbered in italics (see the Note on numbering below). These usually include a Table of Contents, List of Figures, and a List of Tables. Some organizations require an abstract instead of an Executive Summary.
 - Note on numbering pages
Formal reports typically include two sets of page numbers. Pages in the front matter —Table of Contents, List of Figures, List of Tables—are numbered consecutively in lower case Roman numerals. The title page is not numbered, but the Table of Contents usually is ii. All page numbers—Roman and Arabic—are typically centered at the bottom of the page. Regular page numbering, using Arabic numerals, begins after the front matter, typically starting with the Executive Summary. Pages in appendices continue the numbering sequence from the body of the text.
 - Table of Contents
In order of appearance, the Table of Contents comes first. It lists the headings and subheadings of the document and the page number on which each begins. Subheadings should be indented. Make sure the headings and subheadings in the body of the document are the same as those in the Table of Contents. The Table of Contents also contains a list of all appendices. List each appendix separately, along with the page number on which it begins. Each appendix should have a letter and title (for instance, Appendix A: Design Specification).

To punctuate a Table of Contents, place a series of periods, called “leaders,” between the heading and the page number. The page number should extend to the right-hand margin.

- List of Figures

If your document contains more than five figures, put a List of Figures after the Table of Contents. Figures include illustrations, sketches, photographs, graphs, charts, and maps. The list should contain the figure number, the figure title, and the page number on which the figure appears.

NOTE: Consecutively number the figures throughout the report using Arabic numerals (Figure 1, Figure 2).

- List of Tables

If your document contains more than five tables, put a List of Tables after the List of Figures. If there is no List of Figures, put it after the Table of Contents. The list should include the table number, the table title, and the page number on which the table is found.

NOTE: Consecutively number the tables throughout the report using Arabic numerals (Table 1, Table 2).

- Executive summary

An executive summary encapsulates in one page the main points of the report so that executives and managers can read it quickly to make administrative and budgeting decisions without reading all of the detail in the body of the report. An executive summary typically contains:

- A title that labels it an executive summary
- A brief statement of the problem that led to the project (one or two sentences)
- A brief statement of the purpose and scope of the project (one or two sentences).

NOTE: If the project was funded by an outside grant, indicate that in this part of the executive summary.

- A brief description of the methodology used to develop the design: interviews, user testing, performance testing, etc. (one or two sentences).
- Avoid mentioning steps that are common to all design projects, such as brainstorming, design reviews, and analysis of competitive products. Instead, focus on the steps that distinguish your project from others, such as your specific methods of testing mockups and obtaining information from experts.
- A summary of the design and its benefits. This is the most important part of the executive summary and should describe the design's major features and benefits. You may briefly describe each feature and concisely state the major benefits of the design. Alternatively, you may describe the major requirements and explain how the key features fulfill each of them. You may present this summary as a table or in short paragraphs. You may also include a photo or drawing of your design.
- If applicable, a brief statement (one or two sentences) of significant limitations of the design

- Body (text of the report)

The body of the report presents the design problem and your solution in a way that persuades the client that the design meets all stakeholder needs. The body of the report starts on the page following the executive summary and usually consists of the following parts. Naturally, the report should appropriately reflect the project, so if your project does not lend itself to this structure, talk to your instructors about alternative ways of organizing the report.

- Introduction that summarizes the problem and the report's purpose
 - Major users and requirements
 - Design concept
 - Rationale
 - Limitations
 - Conclusion
- References

Your report must include a complete list of references of all the books, articles, websites, and interviews you've used to explain your problem and your rationale. This list appears at the end of the body of the report, but before the appendices.

NOTE: If the project was funded by an outside grant, indicate that above the list of references.
- Appendices

Most reports require appendices that support or supplement information in the body of the document. They are useful for the following kinds of information, which some readers will want to examine in detail. For example, if your client wants to build your design, he will refer not only to your instructions but to the Bill of Materials to find vendor names and materials needed. If he wants to have more work done on the design, he may need to see what performance testing you have done and decide whether more testing is needed.