

How to use the MLA final report template

Sections and headings:

- **An abstract is not compulsory**

Abstract explanation:

The abstract should summarise the thrust of the work, highlight the results and provide the main recommendation. It should answer the questions:

- why the work was done
- what industry benefit/s will arise from the work

The abstract should be a maximum of 10 lines or 200 words. This is the most difficult to write but effort should be made to ensure it is challenging enough for more information to be requested by the reader.

- **All reports must have an executive summary**

Executive summary explanation:

The executive summary should summarise project objectives, significant results, conclusions and recommendations for future actions. It should answer the following questions:

- why the work was done
- what was achieved
- when and how industry can benefit from the work
- who can benefit from the results

The executive summary should be a maximum of 2 A4 pages.

The executive summary is the most important part of the document.

- **All reports must have sections for background and project objectives**

In most cases these can be taken from the contract.

- **Headings for methodology, results and discussion may be modified as appropriate to the project**
- **Only use appendices if they are relevant to the project**

Final Report style considerations:

- For headings and titles - Capitalise only the first letter of first word and use sentence case for the rest of the title (unless a major word or name is in the title i.e. Australia).
- Capitalise the first letter after a colon or dash in a heading. Eg Impact on meat and livestock industry – Now and in five years time
- Only use '&' for company names (i.e. Meat & Livestock Australia)

Lists and colons/semi colons

There are a number of ways lists can be presented. Contemporary grammar leans towards minimal use of punctuation especially if it doesn't add to the meaning. MLA's style follows this practice below.

Lists with short phrases or sentences are introduced with a colon, for example: MLA members can expect:

- regular copies of feedback
- additional voting entitlements
- a free email subscription to Meat & Livestock Weekly
- direct access to MLA on a 1800 number

Only use semi colons or a full stop after each bullet point if necessary for clarification (unless each bullet is a separate point, in which case they are like normal sentences, ie start in caps, end in full stop).

Citations

Citations are marked in the body copy with a superscript numeral (lorem1). The author's name, publication and publication date, or other relevant information such as volume number, are referenced at the bottom of the page.

Footnotes

Footnotes appear at the bottom of the page, or below the table or chart they refer to. The conventional order for footnotes is:

*
†
‡
§
||
#

If more footnotes are required # is followed by double symbols – **, ††, etc.
For more grammar and writing tips, see the MLA publishing guide on the intranet.