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ENGL 365 – Technical Writing

Secs. 007, 008, 011, 012

16 January 2024 (updated 16 January 2025)

Informal Report (IR)

Choose one (1) of the following three (3) options:

1. **You have recently completed business travel as the employee of a company (any rank or salary level)**
2. **You have recently completed business travel as the employee of a government agency (local, state, or federal)**
3. **You have recently completed business travel as a freelancer or self-employed worker**

**Compose a narrative report that discusses the nature and details of your business travel, as well as a justification for the expenses accrued from your business travel. For either of the above options you will need to design a logo and provide a name for your business or employer. Your trip should be minimum of three (3) full days and a maximum of seven (7) full days.**

Trip scenario

Trip reports are a special genre of memo that deal with justifying the time and money associated with business travel. Before you justify your hypothetical trip, you must first come up with a scenario that explains why you planned and took the trip.

You may choose any type of business for your scenario except that you may not reuse types of businesses associated with your MAL assignment. Your IR scenario, in other words, must be different from your MAL scenario.

While you may make up or fictionalize the names of restaurants or hotels, the city (or cities) and country (or countries) you visit should be *real* places.

You are encouraged to visit foreign countries in your scenario. Depending on the distance from each destination, you may be able to visit multiple cities (Kyoto and Osaka, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia, etc.) or multiple countries in the same trip (the Netherlands and Belgium, Honduras and El Salvador, etc.).

Here are some classic genres (or types) of business travel:

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| GENRE | DESCRIPTION |
| Trade show or conference or expo | Presenting your work or product at an industry event alongside competitors usually hosted at a conference center or hotel ballroom |
| Mergers and acquisitions | Representatives of a larger company visiting the offices of a smaller company before the acquisition of the latter by the former |
| Raw materials | Sourcing the materials needed to produce your product and sell it on the market through visiting countries where the raw materials are common or cheap to harvest |
| Media appearances | Guest-starring on a television, podcast, or radio program that promotes your product or service to a wider audience |
| Supply chain reporting | Checking in on the manufacturing of your product at the various levels of production in factories nationally or abroad |
| Location scouting | Traveling to potential markets to research the area and determine if it is suitable for an outlet or branch of your business or visiting a factory that you’re interested in contracting with for manufacturing |
| Research and development | Visiting a foreign country to see how they tackle a logistical problem such as transportation infrastructure to apply that knowledge to your home country |
| Professional sports | Traveling for competing, judging, officiating, or otherwise helping to run a sporting event |

Some of these genres only work for certain types of businesses and you may construct a scenario with a different trip genre from the above options. Remember however that, though the travel for this assignment is not required for you as a student/writer, your scenario should make sense for your business and professional goals. While the scenario should be a work of fiction, it should nonetheless be a work of realism, *not* fantasy.

You are encouraged to (as with the MAL) draw on your own work backgrounds in constructing your scenario just so long as you anonymize the information and make up your own company name(s) and logo.

Please note that business travel cannot be completed for the purposes of illegal activity, even if such illegal activity is considered business.

Trip rationale

Regardless of the option you choose for this assignment, in your IR you must rationalize why the business travel was worthwhile.

Business travel has often been considered a dying phenomenon since the almost universal adoption of the internet. The COVID-19 pandemic has further made business travel even more endangered. The phenomena of “bleisure” travel, or travel for work or business purposes but that also includes touristic activities within the same trip, is a recent trend that attempts to sustain the losses that the business travel industry has sustained since the rise of the internet and, later, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet there are things about traveling in person and meeting someone that justifies the time, money, and risk inherent in travel but not inherent in digitally mediated communication (social media, email, Skype, Zoom, telephone, etc.) and you must discuss what these things are relative to your specific scenario.

Visuals

In addition to your company or agency logo your IR should include at least three (3) images of your choice, along with captions. The images should be inserted anywhere *below* the Logo, To:, From:, Date:, and Subject: sections (see table below).

Your images should reflect the (hypothetical) business travel by focusing on your destination and the famous sights associated with it (such as Bourbon Street for New Orleans) or cultural sights associated with the city (like the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City) or some food associated with the city or region (Nashville style Hot chicken for example).

Your chosen images should be linked with the narrative of your trip in the IR, so do not include images that have nothing to do with your chosen countries and or cities.

Style

Since you are writing the report after the trip has been completed, it makes sense to use simple past tense for your narrative in the IR (such as “On Thursday we had a business luncheon with the new clients and later that afternoon we played golf at the hotel course”).

Usability

While the parts of a trip report are relatively fixed, it is up to the writer to present the information in a way that is usable and reader friendly. Some means of doing this include using color or boldface type, using larger text size for subheadings, providing space between sections, and using short paragraphs within sections.

Length requirement

The document should be 1000-1500 words or roughly 4-6 pages of single-spaced text.

Citation

There should be in-text parenthetical citations for the images as well as a works cited section at the end that lists each image alphabetically with as much citation information as is possible to find (the image title and URL are the minimum citation requirements for each entry).

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| SECTION | DESCRIPTION |
| Logo | Designed using Canva or a similar service or program |
| To: | Identify the recipient’s name, title, and affiliation |
| From: | Writer’s name, title, and affiliation within the scenario |
| Date: | Include the full date of when you write the report after travelling  |
| Subject: | A short description listing the rationale of the trip and where you went |
| Purpose | Discuss the problem or event that led to your decision to travel |
| Schedule | Your itinerary including details about the location of each activity and dates and times |
| Interviews | Quote or paraphrase important conversations with who you met on the trip and remember to identify all speakers with their titles and affiliations |
| Expenses | Provide numerical figures for all business-related expenses for your trip with a written description of each figure |
| Reflection | Discuss things from your trip that you anticipated would happen but did not and things that you did not anticipate would happen but did happen |
| Conclusion | Sum up your trip and reflect on why it was worth taking |
| Works Cited | List each image citation in MLA format with as much identifying information as possible |

Due dates

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| --- | --- | --- |
| SECTION  | ROUGH DRAFT | FINAL DRAFT |
| 007 | 9 April 2025 | 16 April 2025 |
| 008 | 9 April 2025 | 16 April 2025 |
| 011 | 3 April 2025 | 10 April 2025 |
| 012 | 3 April 2025 | 10 April 2025 |

Students should bring print or digital copies of their work to class for peer review, as stated in the syllabus. The final draft should be submitted to Moodle as a .pdf (ideal), .doc or .docx file.