

Technical Summary Checklist

Including summaries and wrap-ups in the text of your document will help guide the reader, and can provide natural transitions from one section of the document to another.

This checklist will help you evaluate the summaries and wrap-ups that you include within the text of a longer technical document. See the Executive Summaries and Abstracts Checklist for assessment criteria for those types of documents.

- Have you targeted all summaries to the needs of your intended audience?
- Have you included summaries and wrap-ups wherever they are needed to target your intended audience?
- Do summaries help the reader with transitions from one section of the document to the next?
- Is the summary as concise as possible without sacrificing thoroughness and completeness?
- Does each summary follow a deductive structure that includes the following elements?
 - A statement of purpose that creates a framework for the reader's understanding.
 - Frontloaded conclusions and recommendations, provided the reader will not be hostile to them.
 - All relevant supporting facts arranged in a logical order.
 - Related information grouped logically and set off by headings if necessary, especially in longer summaries.
- Have you carefully differentiated the summaries from the rest of the document, either by formatting or by providing subheadings?
- Have you checked your summaries to avoid the following common problems?
 - Too much information.
 - The list syndrome.
 - Terminology that is inconsistent with the rest of the document.
- Have you considered any potential cultural differences in your audience's expectations for summaries?
- Have you asked a representative reader to review your summaries for appropriateness?