Informal Reports
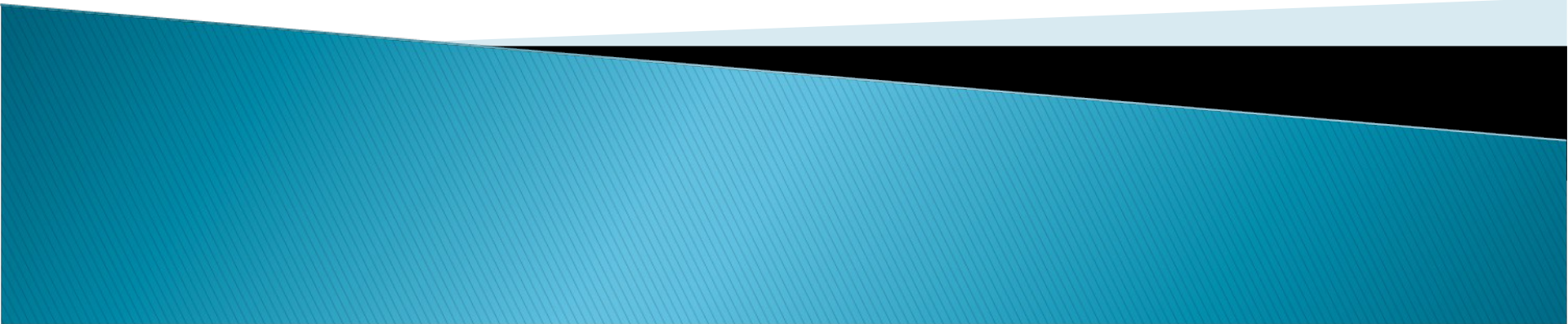
Where to Gather Data for Reports

- Look in company records.
- Make personal observations.
- Use surveys, questionnaires, and inventories.
- Conduct interviews.
- Search printed material such as books, newspapers, and periodicals.
- Search databases and other electronic resources.

Report Writing Styles – Informal Style

Informal Writing Style	
Use	Short, routine reports
	Reports for familiar audiences
	Noncontroversial reports
	Most reports to company insiders
Effect	Feeling or warmth, personal involvement, closeness
Characteristics	Use of first-person pronouns (*I, we, me, my, us, our*)
	Use of contractions (*can't, don't*)
	Emphasis on active-voice verbs (*I conducted the study*)
	Shorter sentences; familiar words
	Occasional use of humor, metaphors
	Occasional use of colorful speech
	Acceptance of author's opinions and ideas

Report Writing Styles –Formal Style

	Formal Writing Style
Use	Theses
	Research studies
	Controversial or complex reports (especially to outsiders)
Effect	Impression of objectivity, accuracy, professionalism, fairness
	Distance created between writer and reader
Characteristics	Absence of first-person pronouns; use of third person (*the researcher, the writer*); increasingly, however, the informal style is acceptable
	Absence of contractions (*cannot, do not*)
	Use of passive-voice verbs (*the study was conducted*)
	Complex sentences; long words
	Absence of humor and figures of speech
	Reduced use of colorful adjectives and verbs
	Elimination of "editorializing" (author's opinions, perceptions)

Preparing Typical Informal Reports

1. Information reports
2. Progress reports
3. Justification/recommendation reports
4. Feasibility reports
5. Minutes of meetings
6. Summaries

❶ Information Reports

Information reports provide findings without analysis or persuasion. For example, your boss asks you to investigate prepaid legal services as a possible employee benefit.

Information Reports

Introduction | dings | Conclusion

- Explain why you are writing; define purpose.
- Describe credibility of data methods and sources.
- Provide background.
- Preview what is to follow.

Information Reports

Introduction   Findings   ...clusion

- Organize chronologically, alphabetically, topically, by importance, or by another method.
- Group similar topics together.
- Use appropriate headings.

Information Reports

Introduction　dings　Conclusion

- Summarize findings.
- Suggest action to be taken.
- Express appreciation, if applicable.

❷ Progress Reports

Progress reports explain the progress of continuing projects. For example, you must report on the progress of a golf tournament your organization is planning.

Progress Reports

- Specify in the opening the purpose and nature of the project.
- Provide background information if the audience requires filling in.
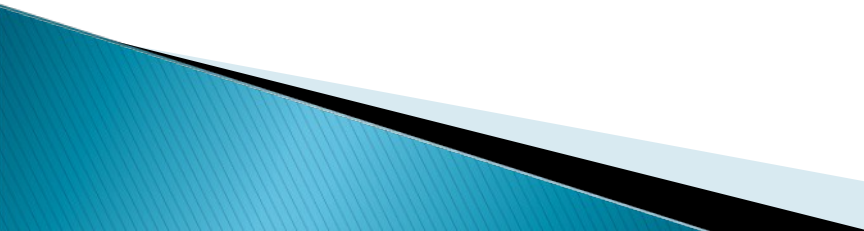- Describe the work completed.

Progress Reports

- Explain the work currently in progress, including personnel, activities, methods, and locations.
- Anticipate problems and possible remedies.
- Discuss future activities and provide the expected completion date.

Justification/ Recommendation Reports

Justification/recommendation reports are written to justify or recommend something, such as buying equipment, changing a procedure, hiring an employee, consolidating departments, and so forth.

Reader Response Determines Structure

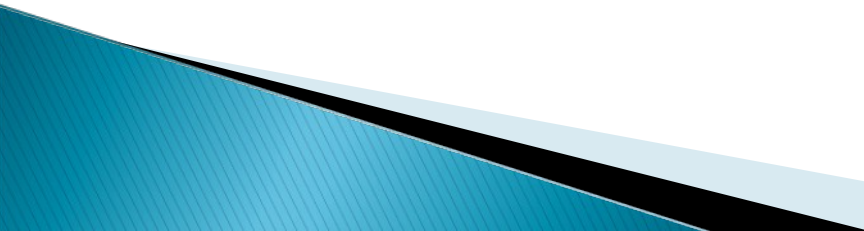| Reader will likely agree with recommendations	Reader may oppose recommendations

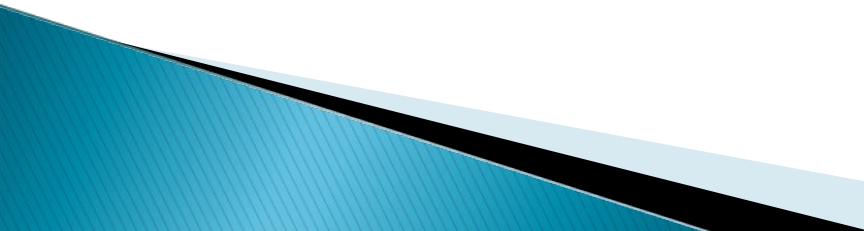## Direct Pattern

- Problem
- Recommendations
- Facts
- Discussion

Indirect Pattern
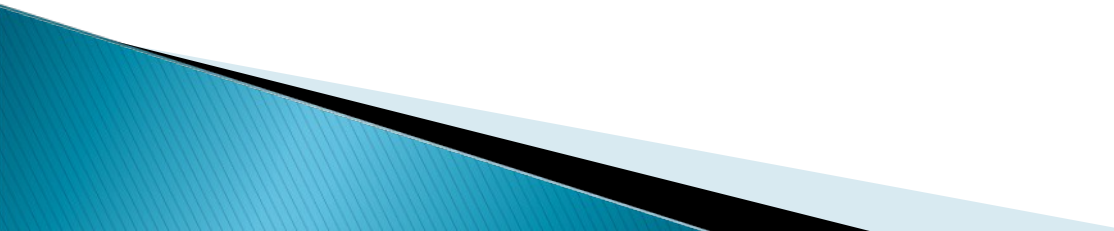
- Problem
- Facts
- Discussion
- Recommendations

Justification/ Recommendation Reports

- Use direct organization for nonsensitive topics and recommendations that will be agreeable to readers.
- Use indirect organization when readers may oppose a recommendation or when circumstances suggest caution.
- Identify the problem or the need briefly.
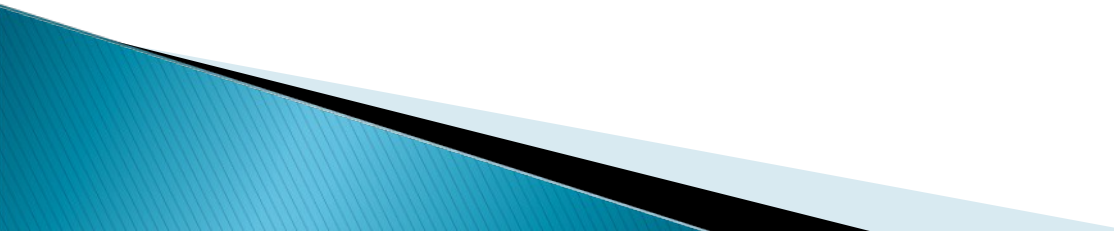- Announce the recommendation, solution, or action concisely and with action verbs.

Direct Pattern

- Identify the problem or the need briefly.
- Announce the recommendation, solution, or action concisely and with action verbs.
- Explain more fully the benefits of the recommendation or steps to be taken to solve the problem.
- Present a discussion of pros, cons, and costs.
- Conclude with a summary specifying the recommendation and action to be taken.

Indirect Pattern

- Make a general reference to the problem in subject line.
- Describe and establish credibility for the seriousness of the need or problem that your recommendation addresses.
- Discuss alternative solutions, beginning with the least likely to succeed.
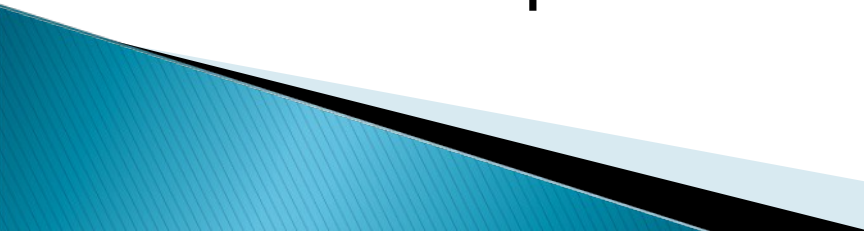- Present most promising alternative—your recommendation—last.

Indirect Pattern

- Show how the advantages of your recommendation outweigh its disadvantages.

- Summarize your recommendation and   any action required.

- Ask for authorization to proceed if necessary.

❹ Feasibility Reports

Feasibility reports examine the practicality and advisability of following a course of action. For example, your company must decide whether to add a child-care facility.

Feasibility Reports

- Begin by announcing your decision immediately.
- Describe the background and problem necessitating the proposal.
- Discuss the benefits of the proposal.
- Describe any problems that may result.
- Calculate the costs associated with the proposal, if appropriate.
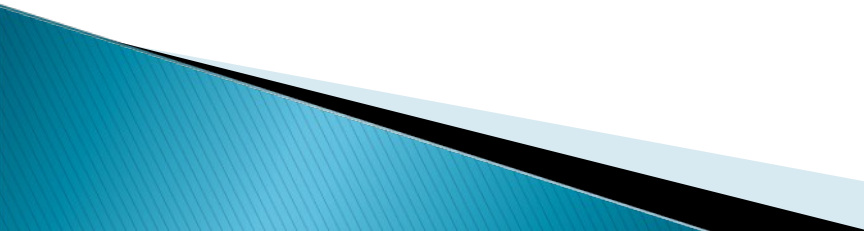- Show the time frame necessary for implementation of the proposal.

Minutes of Meetings

Meeting minutes summarize the proceedings of a meeting.

Minutes of Meetings
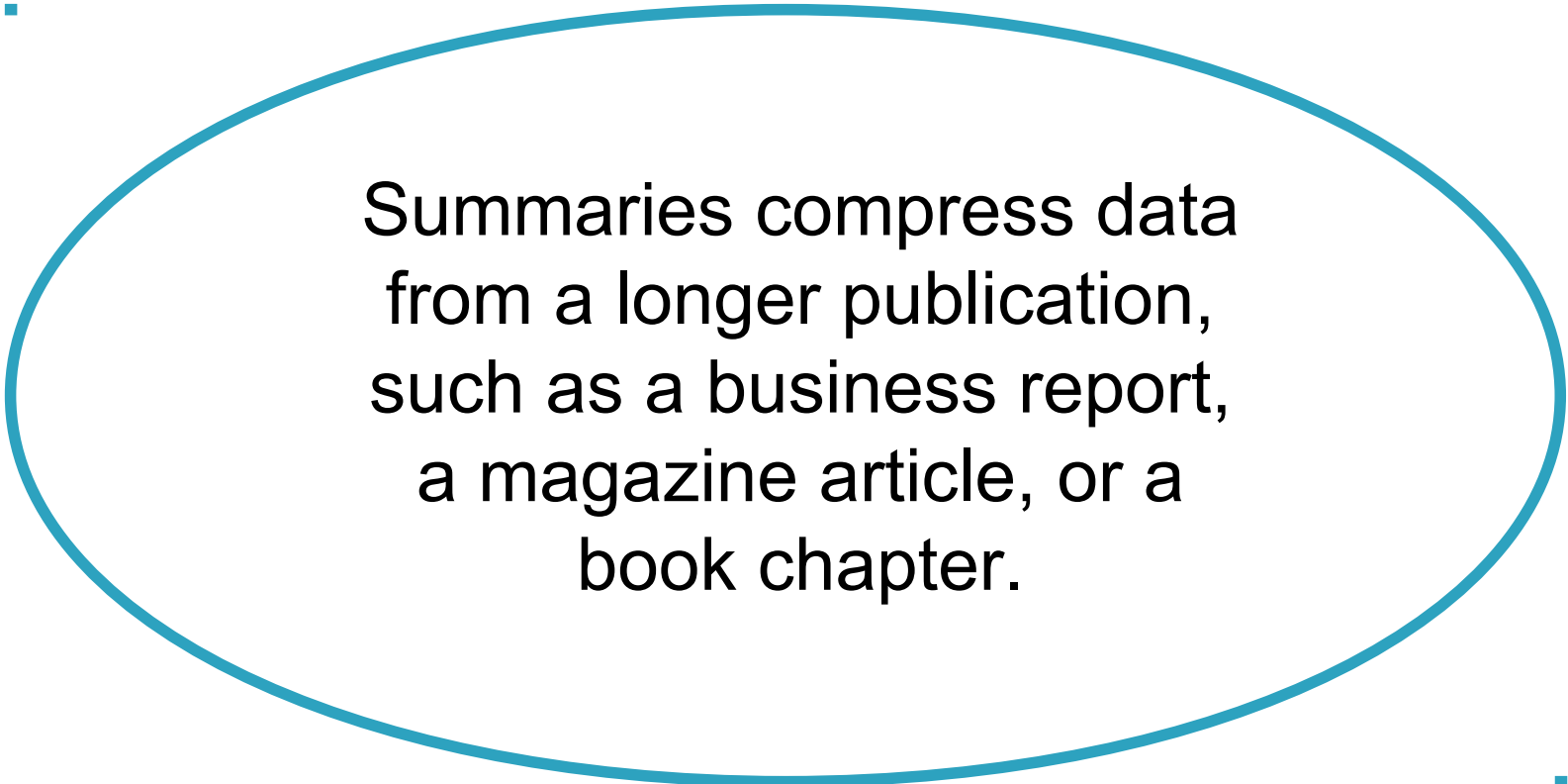
- Include name of group, date, time, place, name of the meeting.
- List names of attendees and absentees.
- Describe disposition of previous minutes.
- Record old business, new business, announcements, and reports.
- Include the precise wording of motions.

Minutes of Meetings

- Record the vote and action taken.
- Conclude with the name and signature of the individual recording the minutes.

Summaries

Summaries compress data from a longer publication, such as a business report, a magazine article, or a book chapter.

Summaries

- Present the goal or purpose of the document being summarized.
- Highlight the research methods (if appropriate), findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Omit illustrations, examples, and references.
- Organize for readability by including headings and bulleted or enumerated lists.
- Include your reactions or an overall evaluation of the document if asked to do so.