

# White Paper Guide

STEM 238

FALL SEMESTER 2020

## What are White Papers?

Sometimes referred to as Background Reports, *White Papers* are business documents designed to convey policy, present technical information, or propose a problem and solution.

Often, White Papers give information from completed projects or propose future projects. While not traditionally marketing papers, some companies have begun using White Papers for marketing purposes.

## Purpose

In a STEM environment, the topic or problem you want to address in a White Paper will come from your current STEM needs.

- Be specific enough to fit the scope of the white paper
- Define your purpose clearly

As you plan your White Paper, consider the needs and expectations of your audience.

- What does your audience expect from you?
- What does your audience already know about your topic?
- What objections might your audience have?
- How do you expect your audience to use your report?

## Research

### **Primary Research**

Surveys

Interviews

Blog Posts

Official Records

### **Secondary Research**

Journal Articles

Books

Library Research

Reviews

The information in your White Paper should be objective and truthful.

- Include accurate information from your research.
- Avoid using biased or non-credible sources.
- Include all relevant information.

# Organization

## Front Matter Elements

Title Page

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abstract

## Main Elements

Introduction

Problem Statement

Proposed Solution

Conclusion

## Back Matter Elements

Appendix

References

Index

Choose a title that both conveys the specific purpose of the White Paper and one that will gain the attention of your intended audience.

*Instead of*

“Increasing Knowledge of Project X”

*Use*

“Increasing Knowledge of Project X: An analysis of the benefits of Technology X”

Your table of contents should include relevant sections and their page numbers.

## Table of Contents

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Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Technology Z's Performance.....	a
Technology X's Improvements.....	b
Technology Budget.....	c
Recommendation.....	d
References.....	e

Your list of figures (if applicable) should contain the figure names and page numbers.

### List of Figures

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Figure 1.....	2
Figure 2.....	4

### Abstract

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For the past ten years, this area of research X has relied on Technology Z to help us better understand its benefits to the scientific community. As our lab has grown, so has our understanding of X . As such, our team was tasked with researching advances in productivity technology. We found Technology X can offer significant advantages over Technology Z.

### Introduction

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Our team was tasked with analyzing our current Technology Z, to determine if the research continues to answer the questions related to a better understanding of the problem. In our analysis, we considered the historical performance of Technology Z, our current data shows the benefits of newer technology applications in addressing this problem. Over the past decade, Technology Z has helped us consistently increase our understanding by approximately 5% per year. However, over the past

The Problem Statement section provides information about the topic or problem introduced in the White Paper. This section should include a discussion of the importance of the topic or solution. You should present the detailed findings of your research in this section. Questions to consider include

- What is this topic or problem?
- Why is this topic or problem/solution important?
- How does the topic or problem/solution directly affect the audience?

The Proposed Solution section provides the proposed solution or solutions.

- Provide all feasible solutions for the reader.
- Describe how the solution(s) would be implemented.
- Provide information about costs associated with the solution.

## Conclusion

This section concludes the White Paper and should summarize the White Paper and include the recommended solution to the problem, if applicable

Use clear, specific and informative headings.

<b>Instead of</b>	<b>Use</b>
Problem Statement	Technology's Impact on the Understanding
Recommendation	Using Technology X to Improve our Knowledge

Avoid inflated language.

<b>Instead of</b>	<b>Use</b>
Thus	So
Transformation	Change

## Avoid jargon and idioms

<b>Instead of</b>	<b>Use</b>
We hit it out of the ballpark.	We succeeded.
Technology X costs an arm and a leg.	Technology X costs twice that of Technology Z.

Write in the active voice when possible.

<b>Passive Voice</b>	<b>Active Voice</b>
The ball was thrown by the boy.	The boy threw the ball.
Technology X will be purchased.	We recommend purchasing Technology X.

Use gender neutral language:

- Use firefighter rather than fireman.
- Use flight attendant rather than stewardess.
- Avoid he or she.

Avoid disability bias:

- Use people with disabilities rather than disabled people.
- Use “people with mental health experiences,” rather than “mentally ill people.”

## List of Figures

Figure 1.....  
Figure 2.....  
Figure 3.....  
Figure 4.....

### Abstract

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### Introduction

Our team was tasked with analyzing our current understanding, Technology Z, to determine if the how to continue to improve the overall progress in this field. In our analysis, we considered the historical performance of Technology Z, and the costs and benefits of newer technology, such as Technology X.

Your audience should be able to easily and naturally navigate through the information in your White Paper. You can increase the readability of your document by including

- Headers and page numbers
- Clear and specific headings and subheadings
- Relevant figures and illustrations
- Bullet points or numbered lists