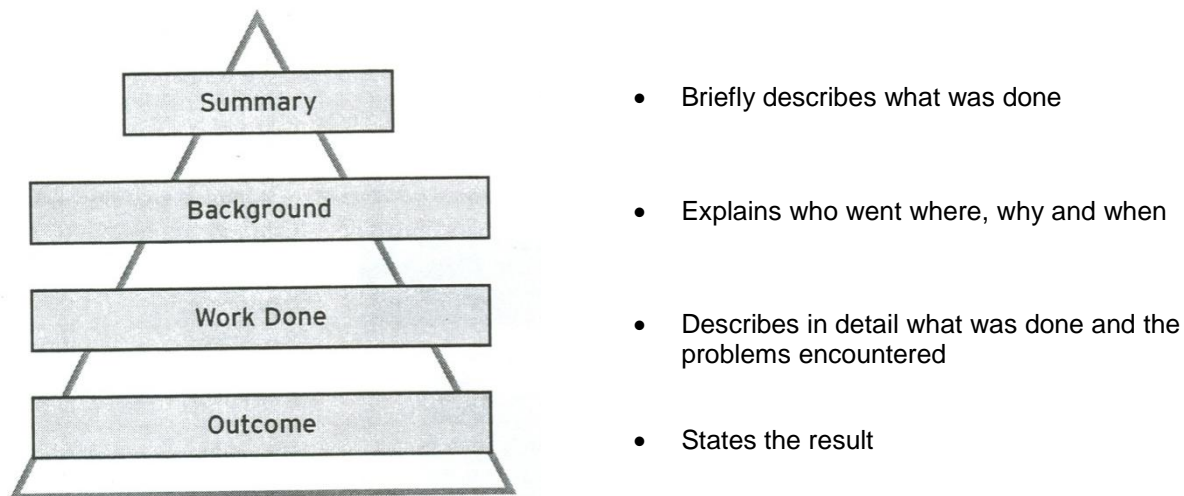


Tips for Reporting a Field Assignment

Whenever you return from a field assignment, you will be expected to write a brief report describing what you saw, what you did, and, what still needs to be done. (A field assignment is a job done away from your normal place of work) this applies just as much to a one-hour visit to a local computer distributor to see a new software program demonstrated, as it does to a three-week stay at a paper mill during which you and two other team members replace old wiring and install a new control panel. The report you write should describe your impressions (of the computer software) or provide a detailed account of the work that was done (at the paper mill). You should submit a written report rather than a spoken report partly because you shouldn't trust your memory to remember details several months after the assignment. A written report is essential mostly because your company will need a permanent record of what was done and to help technicians who visit the site and work with the same equipment or people in the future.

The four writing compartments for a field assignment report are shown in Figure 3-3.

Figure 3-3 Writing pyramid for a field assignment report



1. In the **Summary Statement**, *briefly* describe where you went and what you did or achieved, and comment on the trip's outcome.
2. In the Background, provide information about the assignment that is not a doing part of the job. Generally, this means answering the questions: *Who* went *where*, *when*, and *why*? For example:

Who?	—————→	Wes Freeman and I visited the
Where?	—————→	Whinney Lake monitoring station

When? _____ → **on July 17 and 18, 1999**
Why? _____ → **to carry out annual maintenance of the automatic water level measuring equipment.**

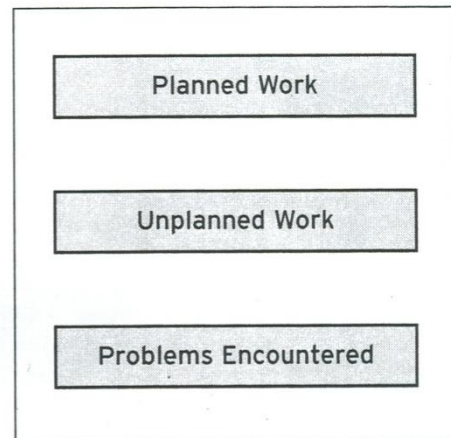
You may also include information such as the name of the person authorizing the trip, the type of transportation you used (e.g. personal or company automobile, scheduled airline flight, or charter helicopter), and the names of people you worked with or contacted at the job site.

In a very short trip report you may combine the **Background** with the **Summary Statement**.

- In the **Work Done** compartment, describe what you did while at the job site or on the field assignment. This can range from a short description of a routine test of a radio transmitter and receiver, to a long narrative pointing out problems with the transmitter and describing unscheduled work you had to carry out to make it work at top operating potential.

In a longer report, we suggest you break this compartment into three sub-compartments:

- Write about Planned Work or routine work very briefly. If possible, refer to an instruction sheet or maintenance procedure rather than mentioning all the details of the work that was done.
- Cover unusual or Unplanned Work in more detail, because it will be new to the reader. State what you did, why you did it that way, and what the results were.
- Explain the Problems Encountered in detail, so readers understand the factors that made the job more difficult than expected and, if necessary, what steps should be taken to prevent the problems from happening again.



- In the **Outcome** compartment, comment on the main achievement(s) or result(s) of your visit and draw attention to any work that you could not do or finish. If possible, suggest how, when, and by whom the work would be done or completed. A short informal trip report is shown Figure 3-4.

Hilary:

My examination of the Rega model 301 bread-slicing machine shows it would be a good choice for our bakery. I examined the 301 in operation on October 20 at Modern Bakeries' Main Street plant, at the invitation of MB's production assistant, George Fenton.

The Rega 301 is fast, efficient, and extremely safe. It fully lives up to the manufacturer's claims in the attached advertising leaflet. Mr. Fenton said that it regularly slices 2700 loaves per hour, which is 20% faster than our machine. They have two Rega 301s and have had no breakdowns in the seven months they have been in operation. The 301's positive safety features are particularly attractive.

I am convinced this is the right machine for our bakery and recommend we budget \$16 000 to buy three next year.

Nancy

Figure 3-4 A short field assignment report

Source: Blicq, Robert and Lisa A. Moretto, *Get to the Point! Writing Email, Letters, Memos, Reports and Proposals*, Pearson Education Canada, 2000. Page 45-47.



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