

Writing About Operations Research – Overview

- A OR project report typically contains the following sections:
 1. **Introduction.**
 - What is the system that you are studying?
 - What is the issue with the system you are studying?
 - Why is it important or interesting?
 - What is the decision or prediction problem you are trying to analyze?
 - What operations research or statistical models did you use to analyze your problem?
 2. **Data.**
 - What information does your data contain? How big is your data?
 - Where does your data come from?
 - What does your data “look” like? (e.g., summary statistics, histograms)
 - What are the relationships between the key variables in your data?
 3. **Model.**
 - What are the components of your model, both mathematically and in plain English?
 - What assumptions about the system did you make in your model? Why?
 4. **Results.**
 - How did you run or solve your model?
 - What software or programming language did you use?
 - What model variants did you run, or what alternatives did you test?
 - What were the results of your model, in tables, graphs, and plain English?
 - What do the results mean in the context of your problem?
 - Are there any interesting or surprising trends or trade-offs?
 5. **Conclusion.**
 - To summarize, what is your study about?
 - What are the key takeaways from your results?
 - What courses of action do you recommend, based on your study?
 - What are the limitations of your study? What are some reasonable extensions of your study?
- Writing is an iterative and nonlinear process.
 - You probably won't get things right the first time around.
 - Your problem, data, model and results may evolve as you work on your project.
 - This is natural! You can always go back and revise it.
 - Experienced analysts do this all the time.