

Tool 10



How to Prepare a Committee Report

Adapted from 21st Century Robert's Rules of Order, edited by the Princeton Language Institute, A Laurel Book, Dell Publishing, The Philip Lief Group, Inc., 1995.

To fulfil its mandate, a committee must report to the presbytery, describe its findings and present any resolutions. The entire committee submits a report, which should be in writing. The convener or another committee member usually presents the report.

What can you expect to find in a committee report? Committee reports include the following:

- identification of the committee submitting it
- statement of the task given to the committee or the resolution referring to it
- summary of the methods of investigation the committee used
- summary of the information the committee gathered
- summary of the work accomplished
- committee findings
- committee recommendations.

Steps in the Writing Process

A committee report is composed in stages. All members contribute their opinions, phrases and suggestions. This can be a cumbersome and time-consuming process.

Steps to Streamline the Process

1. Select one writer. To expedite the actual composition, have one committee member write the entire first draft. Choose a person who not only writes well but also is well respected by the committee and represents the majority opinion. The report is written in the first person plural (“We report,” not “I report”).
2. Share the report. The draft is reproduced and a copy is given to every member. Allow ample time for members to study the draft at home and provide feedback to the author of the report.
3. Reflect the majority voice. As the committee prepares its report, it should be careful to include the combined majority voice of the entire committee.
4. After the above has been thoroughly done, some committee members may be unable to ascribe to the majority view. These committee members are entitled to prepare and submit a minority report. This should not be a usual practice but done only when all means of coming to agreement of the committee report have been exhausted.

Any questions or comments? Please contact the Elders’ Institute for information.

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