

Guidelines for Summary Report

Whether you are an Esri Canada GIS scholarship recipient, an Esri Young Scholar applicant, or both, you need to submit a paper. Where to start? The stated requirements for paper submissions are:

Scholarship: "Your report should be a written summary of the project's goals, methodology and results and should include maps and other graphics as appropriate. Include a title page with your name, the name of your institution and your enrolment program.

"The main body (excluding title page, captions and references) should not be more than 1000 words. You should follow your institution's or department's formatting guidelines."

Esri Young Scholar Award: "Summary paper that explains your project or research. 800-1000 words maximum (not including title page, captions and references). Include maps and other illustrations."

That doesn't give you a lot in the way of instructions, does it? But you should notice a few (or several) key points:

- *Summary.* This means main points only... but make sure you clearly explain the goals, methodology and results.
- *1000 words maximum.* Although I don't plan to count words, it will be noticeable if you are well over the maximum – and also if you are well under.
- *Title page.* In itself, it is not that important but it does imply a need for structure in the paper.
- *References.* Yes, you need references. Anything that is not your own and not common knowledge needs to have a citation (University of Toronto Libraries, 2016). Hint: Use the References tab in Word or other citation tools to keep track of your sources and to format in-text citations and the list of references.
- *Include maps.* Should be self-evident. Choose maps that are relevant to your work and include legend, scale, labels and/or North arrow as needed to help the reader understand each map.
- *Include other graphics or illustrations.* They say a picture is worth a thousand words (aside: this is a common saying so it does not need a citation). Since you are limited to 1000 actual words, use flow charts, graphs and other illustrations to help tell your story.
- *Formatting guidelines.* This can cover everything from font size and line spacing, to spelling and punctuation conventions, to how authors are listed in the references. Follow any guidelines that your instructors have asked you to use for assignments and find out if your department or institution has a style manual. If not, consider following [The Canadian Style](#) (ou [le guide du rédacteur](#)) that is available along with other writing tools through the [Language Portal of Canada](#).

Content

So what exactly should you include? That is a question you need to consider very carefully. To give you an idea of how quickly the word count can go up: this document is already over 400 words. If I have to stick to a 1000 word limit, I might be in trouble!

Your report should explain your project or research, or, more specifically, summarize your goals, methodology and results.

- **Goals:** Why did you do the project? (Note: "because it was assigned" is not a valid answer.) What were you hoping to accomplish? Were you trying to prove a hypothesis? Establish a relationship between different factors? Develop a new approach for analyzing a certain type of data? Create a resource (map or app) for a particular audience or purpose?

Express your goals clearly and concisely. If your work was inspired by someone else's, make sure you acknowledge them. Provide introductory or background information about your project so your reader knows why it is important and where to go to learn more.

- **Methodology:** Sorry, but I've never quite been able to wrap my head around what this is supposed to mean. A study of methods? When (if) you are writing your thesis, you can go into great theoretical detail but remember the 1000 word limit here.

You might mention The Geographic Approach - ask, acquire, examine, analyze, act (Artz, 2008) or some other common methodology you may have followed but otherwise stick to describing the methods you used. Better yet, create a flow chart or include a ModelBuilder model to show the process you followed while attempting to accomplish your project goals.

- **Results:** Did you accomplish what you were hoping to accomplish? Were there any surprises? Why or why not? Is there any follow up work you'd like to do? How can you show your results in a way that the reader can understand? One map? Multiple maps? A table? A chart?

Your results will most likely include a map, but not necessarily. If they don't, remember that the guidelines do say "include maps" so you will need to figure out where else in your report a map would be appropriate. Also, remember that your results shouldn't be only visual. You do need to include some kind of concluding statement.

Style and Formatting

There are no specific style or formatting requirements so you are essentially free to use whatever font face, font size, line spacing, writing style, etc., you want. However.

- Remember who will be reading the paper and why you are submitting it (particularly for Esri Young Scholar applications). Let that guide you in your choice of colours and fonts, and that includes colours and fonts in maps and other illustrations. All text should be legible.

- Even in short documents, headings can be used to provide structure and help guide the reader. (Unless they are the uninspired and uninspiring "Introduction" and "Conclusion," which will just waste two of your 1000 words.)
- Use a bibliography (works cited) instead of footnotes or endnotes for any citations.
- Do not split infinitives. This is not my rule, nor a hard and fast grammar rule, but trust me on this. If you don't know what a split infinitive is, see [Split infinitives](#) (Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2016).
- Use Canadian spelling. In particular, *metre* is the proper spelling for the unit of length, not *meter*.

... There may be more I could say, but I've almost reached 1000 words. So remember: when in doubt, ask!

Works Cited

Artz, M. (2008, December 21). *What is The Geographic Approach?* Retrieved March 30, 2016, from GIS and Science: <http://gisandscience.com/2008/12/21/what-is-the-geographic-approach/>

Public Works and Government Services Canada. (2016). *Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers: Split infinitives*. Retrieved March 30, 2016, from HyperGrammer2 - TERMIUM Plus: <http://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2guides/guides/hyper/index-eng.html?lang=eng&page=msplmod.html#splitinf>

University of Toronto Libraries. (2016, January 6). *Citing Sources/Create Your Bibliography*. Retrieved March 30 2016, from <http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citing>