

PROGRESS REPORT

Once you have written a successful proposal and have secured the resources to do a project, you are expected to update the client on the progress of that project. This updating is usually handled by progress reports, which can take many forms: memoranda, letters, short reports, formal reports, or presentations. What information is expected in a progress report? The answer to this question depends, as you might expect, on the situation, but most progress reports have the following similarities in content:

1. **Background on the project itself.** In many instances, the client ... is responsible for several projects. Therefore, the client expects to be oriented as to what your project is, what its objectives are, and what the status of the project was at the time of the last reporting.
2. **Discussion of achievements since last reporting.** This section follows the progress of the tasks presented in the proposal's schedule.
3. **Discussion of problems that have arisen.** Progress reports are not necessarily for the benefit of only the client. Often, you the engineer or scientists benefit from the reporting because you can share or warn your client about problems that have arisen. In some situations, the client might be able to direct you toward possible solutions. In other situations, you might negotiate a revision of the original objectives, as presented in the proposal.
4. **Discussion of work that lies ahead.** In this section, you discuss your plan for meeting the objectives of the project. In many ways, this section of a progress report is written in the same manner as the "Plan of Action" section of the proposal, except that now you have a better perspective for the schedule and cost than you did earlier.
5. **Assessment of whether you will meet the objectives in the proposed schedule and budget.** In many situations, this section is the bottom line for the client. In some situations, such as the construction of a highway, failure to meet the objectives in the proposed schedule and budget can result in the engineers having to forfeit the contract. In other situations, such as a research project, the client expects that the objectives will change somewhat during the project.