

Format for country reports

Due May 1, 2006

Your final writing assignment is to prepare a country report. This document should be 6 to 9 pages long, typewritten, double-spaced, with sensible fonts and margins. (Please do not exceed the 9 page limit.) It will incorporate edited material from your earlier writing assignments, but it will also include some new sections.

The basic objectives of the report are to: (1) give the reader a clear overview of economic conditions in your country; (2) explain why these conditions prevail by drawing on course material; and (3) critically assess the country's recent economic policies, drawing again on the course material.

A good report will be logically structured, tightly reasoned, clearly written, and properly documented. A poor report will lack economic reasoning, include extraneous information, exhibit undisciplined writing, and not cite its sources properly.

As you compose your report, it may help to keep the following analytic grid in mind.¹ Your writing will be evaluated in terms of each of the categories.

	Excellent	Strong	OK	Weak
Economic Content: ideas, thinking, understanding, depth of analysis				
Rigor: cause-effect connections, support for claims				
Organization: structure, coherence, focus, guiding the reader				
Language: sentences, wording, voice, tone, clarity				
Mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation, proofing, documentation				
Overall (This is not a sum of the other responses)				

¹ This grid is based on:

Elbow, Peter (1993). "Ranking, Evaluating and Liking: Sorting Out Three Forms of Judgment," *College English* 55(2), 195.

Your report should include the sections outlined below, although it need not address every issue mentioned under each general heading. Use your judgment and focus on the issues that are important in your country. Finally, please include headings and sub-headings in your report to help the reader (me) see the structure of your document.

Generic Outline

1. General background:

- size (population, total GDP)
- level of development (GDP per capita, life expectancies, caloric intake levels)
- Inequality and poverty (standard inequality measures, percent in poverty)
- growth performance over past twenty years (growth in GDP per capita, savings rates, extent of industrialization, productivity growth)
- factor endowments (skill level of labor force, major natural resources, capital stock per worker if available)

2. Business conditions:

- governance (rule of law, degree of corruption, crime)
- taxation
- macro volatility (volatility in major macro variables)
- infrastructure (provision of roads, utilities, ports)

3. Population, demographic transition and labor markets

- rates of population growth, birth rates, death rates, life expectancy (most recent decade; compared with two decades ago or more)
- population control policies, if any.
- Unemployment rates, migration patterns.

4. Trade and foreign direct investment

- commercial policy (tariff rates, non-tariff barriers, export promotion programs)
- posture toward foreign investors

- trading patterns and their relation to factor endowments
- growth in trade flows
- foreign capital inflows (as a percent of GDP, sectors of destination)

5. Overall assessment of the country's performance

- Has the country made good progress in the past 30 years?
- What in your opinion, is the country doing right?
- What, in your opinion, needs changing?
- General comments

Note:

To find information on trade protection in your country, you may wish to consult The World Bank's WDI data base, which reports taxes on exports (important for countries that export primary products) and taxes on international trade as a percent of total revenues. For tariffs on individual products, use the United Nation's TRAINS web site <http://www.unctad.org/trains/index.htm>. The WDI data base also provides information on net inflows of foreign direct investment. The CIA Factbook also provides information on products traded and trade policies. Finally, for further information on international policies, the Political Risk Yearbook <http://www.prsgroup.com/yearbook/> may prove helpful.