

**ACADEMIC STUDIES**

**ENGLISH**

**Support Materials and Exercises  
for**

**WRITING REPORTS**



**SPRING 1999**

**WRITING REPORTS**  
**ACADEMIC ENGLISH**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Spring 1999

This support module may be used with IAU-ENG 2.9, Writing Informal Reports

IAU-ENG 2.9	WRITING INFORMAL REPORTS
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<b>OBJECTIVE</b>			
Upon successful completion of this unit, the learner will be able to			
1. choose a topic and write a report of approximately 500-750 words.			
2. research the topic using at least 3 sources.			
3. format correctly an appropriate bibliography.			
<b>TEACHING POINTS</b>			<b>Level</b>
<b>Choosing a Topic</b>	1	Suitable for writer's purpose and audience	9
	2	Suitable to assigned length (narrowing)	9
	3	Suitable to resources available	9
<b>Researching</b>	4	Sources: primary (e.g. 1st person interview)	9
	5	secondary	9
	6	Notetaking	9
	7	Distinguishing between fact and opinion	9
	8	Plagiarism	9
<b>Writing Process</b>	9	Using writing process steps interchangeably	9
	10	Choosing an appropriate method of development	9
	11	Focusing the message	9
	12	Choosing "point of view"	9
	13	Identifying appropriate and inappropriate details	9
	14	Importance and placement of transitions	9
	15	Importance of revising to fine-tune effectiveness	9
	16	Importance of editing to eliminate mechanical errors	9
	17	Importance of appearance of final copy	9
<b>Style</b>	18	Technical writing style: use active voice	9
	19	avoid unnecessary words	9
	20	avoid clichés	9
<b>Style (cont'd)</b>	21	short, concise sentences	9

	22	be decisive (avoid “seems” etc.)	9
	23	Sentence variety	9
	24	Word choice: use simple language	9
	25	Define unfamiliar terms	9
<b>Bibliography</b>	26	Content	9
	27	Format	9
	28	Use of footnotes/parenthetical reference	9
Styles of citing references and bibliography change. Be sure to use an up-to-date reference.			
Learners should be made fully aware of the meaning and implications of plagiarism.			
Learners should be encouraged to “share” their writing whenever possible.			

## **NOTE TO FACILITATORS AND LEARNERS:**

1. This module presents information and exercises to accompany the objectives of IAU-ENG 2.9, Writing Informal Reports
2. Learners working to complete the requirements of IAU-ENG should review the module, Writing Paragraphs and Writing Longer Essays as they progress through this unit.
3. Facilitators are free to use any support materials appropriate to their learners' needs.
4. Additional resource materials will probably be required for those wanting more information on this topic or for those needing more practice mastering certain areas. Any text on writing can provide additional useful material.
5. Alternate support materials may be appropriate.
6. Final marks for this module should include evaluations of product/performance at various stages throughout the writing process. As well, the evaluation of the final research report should include areas such as content, structure, mechanics, and presentation.
7. Writing is always the best to learn how to write. Learners should be encouraged to write a "real" report if possible. Learner reports may be filed and then made available to other students as models for research reports.
8. Learner research reports may also be used to support the BAU-ENG module, General Knowledge.
9. If appropriate, learners may use the topic and research from this module to prepare an oral report for presentation with the module, Speaking and Listening Skills. Learners should not, however, simply read or memorize their research report for credit in that section.
10. It is the learner's responsibility to search out additional exercises to supplement the practice work included in this module by consulting with his/her facilitator.
11. Learners should read and analyse short articles, stories, and other communications in conjunction with this module.
12. Because writing and reading are so closely linked, learners who master the concepts in this module will generally see improvement in their reading comprehension.
13. Do **NOT** write in this module. Please make your notes and complete the exercises in your own notebooks so that other learners may also use these booklets.

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## **I INTRODUCTION**

Now that you are familiar with the writing process and the structure of the five paragraph essay, you have the skills you need to write informal reports. No matter how long the presentation or how much material you want to include, basic essay structure still applies. In other words, you still need

### **AN INTRODUCTION**

### **A BODY**

### **A CONCLUSION**

In a longer essay or report, the introduction could require three or four paragraphs (or more), the body could have any number of paragraphs, and the conclusion could be three or four paragraphs or more. In addition, transitions become even more essential because readers need help to understand how all the sections are related to the topic sentence and to each other. The transitions you use can be single words, simple phrases, complete sentences, or in some cases, transition paragraphs.

Many students think that writing a report is a huge task, but in this module you will see that it is not that difficult. The truth is that it is no more difficult to write a long research report than it is to write a five-paragraph essay. The techniques and strategies are the same, but you have more to say, so you need more “room”. You will also learn in this module that there are many different kinds of reports. Some reports are short and simple while others are lengthy.

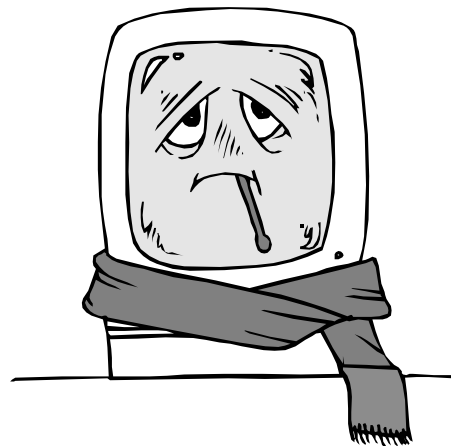
You will be required to write several short reports and a longer research report of about 500-1,000 words. The mark(s) you receive for your reports will form the final mark for this module. There is no final test for this module.

## II WHY LEARN HOW TO WRITE REPORTS?

Report writing is useful in both the academic and the business world, so whether you are planning to continue your education or get a job after you complete your upgrading, this is a skill you will definitely need.

For example, if your boss is thinking about upgrading the computer system in the office, he might ask you to find out what changes are needed, what the costs would be, and which supplier could provide the best equipment at the lowest cost.

To find the answers to these questions, you might begin by visiting local computer dealers, reading current magazines, and talking to other businesses that use computers for the same kind of tasks your office does. Once you had gathered the information, you would take the facts and opinions from these sources and organize them into a presentation that would give your boss all the information he/she needs to make an informed decision on changing and upgrading the computer system.



At school, the informal report format is often used by learners to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of a topic (in any subject) they are learning about.

How you choose to present the information you have gathered will depend on your boss, your business, your facilitator, and the topic you are reporting on. Perhaps you will drop into the boss's office and simply tell him what you have found, or you might make a fancy multimedia computer presentation to a large staff meeting. More likely, however, you will be asked to make a written report. Written reports are particularly useful because they provide a permanent record of the information gathered that can be read and used by many different people, in different locations, at different times.

Imagine how time consuming and expensive it would be for your company to pay your travel expenses around the province (or the country) delivering your report orally to all the supervisors who will be responsible for the decision on the computer upgrade. Your written report could more easily and cheaply be mailed, (faxed or E-mailed) to all concerned.

Later in this program, you will have to make a short oral presentation. Many of the steps in preparing a “speech” are similar to preparing a report. With your instructor’s permission, you may be able to use the same research you do for this module to prepare your oral presentation. (You will be expected to do more than simply read your research report out loud, so you may want to save your research notes.)

### III WHAT IS A REPORT?

A report is always expository writing; that is, it can be either informative or persuasive.

Many students think of report writing as a long, dreary process with few uses in the “real world”. Reports are probably the most common form of work related writing. Reports can be any length, from a single paragraph to many pages, and they can be either formal or informal in tone. Reports can be written or spoken. Depending on the circumstances, a report may be based on your own personal knowledge of a subject or on information you have gathered through reading, listening, and interviewing specifically for the project.

Any time you gather information, organize it, and pass it along, you have created a report. For example, when you comment to a co-worker that “It sure is a cold, grey day with lots of blowing snow” you have, in fact, gathered information from your own experience about the temperature, the precipitation, the wind, etc. and passed it along in the form of a short oral report. If, on the other hand, you had written this same information in a letter to your best friend, - even if it was only one sentence long - you would have created a written report.



The term *report* is difficult to define because it refers to such a wide variety of documents. Reports can be as simple as filling in the blanks or answering a few questions about an accident, or they can be long and involved requiring years of study, hundreds of contributors, and several thick volumes to record the results. What then are the basic characteristics of a report?

1. All reports are *factual*. You must be able to back up any facts you include.
2. All reports *organize* facts into a meaningful presentation.
3. Most reports *interpret* the information gathered.
4. Many reports make *recommendations*.
5. Almost all reports are *assigned or requested*. This means that your purpose and audience are determined before you start to work.

#### IV TYPES OF REPORTS

There are many different kinds of reports. Although this module deals mostly with the informal research report, you should be familiar with the three main types of reports: the form report, the informal report, and the formal report.

##### 1. The Form Report

A great deal of repetitive reporting is done on forms that are designed to record the required information in a convenient way. For example, when you complete your tax return, you have written a *form report*. If you fill in a time sheet or attendance register, you are completing a *form report*. On the following page, you will find a sample time report for an office equipment repair company. The technician records the hours spent working for each client. Each week, the accountant uses these forms to decide how much time/labour to bill the client for services. (The last entry on the time sheet, Administration, means the time that the technician spends in his office doing paper work. Businesses keep track of these “non-productive” hours because this is time that is not earning money. If a technician spends too much time on administration, he/she is costing the company money.)

## MODERN OFFICE REPAIRS

### TIME SHEET

<b>CLIENT NAME</b>	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	<b>Total</b>
Demarais Electronics	3		2		1	6
Haydn and Company		5	3	2		10
Central Aircraft	1		4		2	7
Geomancy International		2		1.5		3.5
Youngman and Associates	2				2	4
Telegraph Journal		3			2	5
ChaleurEmergency Measures Ltd.		1		3.5	1	5.5
Administration Time	2			1	1	4
<b>Daily Totals</b>	8	11	9	8	9	45

Jonathon Smedley

1999

Signature

April 20-24,

Date

## 2. The Informal Report

The term *informal report* is not to be confused with the word “casual”. It simply means that the report does not have to follow the very strict rules that apply to the formal report. Informal reports can take the form of letters, memos, and written presentations. Normally the informal report is quite short (two-three pages), but some organizations prepare informal reports that can be more than 100 pages long. In general, informal reports are used regularly to *permanently* record information about accidents and incidents that happen in the work place. Other types of reports that fall into this category are

- sales reports,
- service reports,
- trip reports,
- progress reports,
- periodic reports,
- incident report,
- accident report.

### a. *The Incident Report*

In business, you might be required to complete an incident report about a piece of equipment that failed on your shift and caused a delay in the work schedule. In this case, you would gather all the information about the problem from the employees involved: the time, date, and circumstances of the event. You would also report on how long the repairs were expected to take, if alternate equipment could be (had been) rented or shipped in from another job site. In addition, you might have to research or calculate the cost of this breakdown and “guessitimate” the date when production can begin again. Depending on the situation, your report might be a half page memo to your immediate supervisor or a multi-page document for the president of the company. Here is an example of a short incident report presented in memo form to an immediate supervisor. Informal reports written in this format are usually destined for someone *within* your own company.



### ***b. The Accident Report***

For many reasons, accidents must be reported accurately and quickly. In writing an accident report either for your boss, your personal insurance agent, or the police, you must include all the relevant details as objectively as possible. It is sometimes a good idea to include a drawing or diagram of the accident so that the reader will have a better idea of what actually happened. Here is a sample of an accident report, written up in paragraph form. This sample report format is intended for someone inside your own company.

## **H. Q. CONSTRUCTION CO.**

On November 17, 1999, John Finch and I were involved in a multi-vehicle accident, which resulted in moderate injuries to John and substantial damage to the company's service van #293.

The accident occurred at 7:20 a.m. on Highway 2 about 4 kilometres north of the Hampton exit. We were travelling north on our way to Miramichi to repair some company equipment at Chaleur Airmelt Corp. John was driving, and the road conditions were generally good.

As we rounded a blind curve (see attached diagram), we saw a Ford truck, Ontario licence number BCV 452, driven by Anna Merchant and a tractor trailer unit, New Brunswick licence number CVV 998, driven by Albert Michaud, collide head on. Three vehicles driving ahead of us were unable to avoid a collision with the two primary vehicles. John applied the brakes cautiously, but we hit a small patch of ice and our truck veered into the ditch on the right side of the road before striking a culvert. We did not collide with the five other vehicles involved in the first accident.

John was taken to hospital with a broken leg and some cuts and bruises. I suffered no physical injuries, other than a stiff neck. Both John and I were wearing our seatbelts, and the air bags deployed at the time of impact. John will be in Hampton Regional Hospital until November 22 (3 days). The emergency room staff at the Charlo Regional Hospital x-rayed my neck and found no damage.

The company van # 293 was towed to Cormier's Garage in Moncton.

Matthew Doucet

November 19, 1999

### ***C. The Progress Report***

If a project continues over several months, progress reports may be required regularly. Progress reports can be as short as a single paragraph or as long as 50+ pages depending on the job. Regardless of size, the progress report answers four basic questions.

Will the project be completed on schedule?

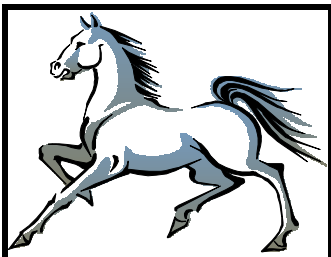
What progress has been made?

Are there any problems to report?

What do you expect to happen in the next reporting period?

A progress report in letter format follows. Using letter format usually means the report will circulate outside your organization. For more about reports, consult a technical writing textbook. A sample report in letter format is printed on the next page.





## Windhorse and Associates

123 Centre Street  
Newtownville, New Brunswick  
E0D 5T0

April 23, 1999

Martha Barrington  
President  
Barrington Consultants  
95 James Lane  
Saint John, NB E3N 4X9

Dear Mrs. Barrington:                      Re: Contract # 99-8711-901 H

The Acme survey crew completed its site survey on April 15. Poor weather then delayed the work schedule for six days. The work should, however, be back on schedule by May 19, at the latest.

The subcontractor finished clearing the site and disposing of the debris on April 22.

Construction is scheduled to start on April 30, and the construction trailer and mobile office are already in place. In addition, the contractor has already signed contracts for the hauling of materials with three local companies.

We plan to have the cement work completed by May 15 and to be ready for the next stage of the project by May 21. As of this date, we will be back on schedule.

If you have any questions or problems, you can reach me now on my cellular phone (545-9988) or by leaving a message on my voice mail at 778-2233.

Yours truly,

David Jackson

David Jackson  
Job Site Coordinator

### **3. The Formal Report**

A formal report is a specialized kind of report that is more like a book and is often bound in covers. These kinds of reports are usually more than 2,000 words long and deal with subjects of importance. Often the audience for a formal report is someone who works outside your organization. You will learn more about the structure and presentation of the formal report later in Senior Academic Upgrading.

#### **EXERCISE**

Create each of the following reports in the format suggested. Submit your work to your instructor before continuing. Indicate the type of report you have written.

- a) a friendly letter to your high school principal about your new job in Alberta
- b) a description of an accident report for the police (in paragraph form) about an accident in which you were involved but not at fault.
- c) a memo to your supervisor about a phone call you just received announcing that the new carpeting for the reception area would be 3 weeks late arriving. Include your suggestions for ways to reduce the problems associated with this delay.
- d) a business letter to a client about the progress your company has made building their new home.

## V THE RESEARCH REPORT

A research report can be presented in either a formal or informal format. In this module, you will learn how to research, organize and write an *informal research report*.

### The Research Report and the Writing Process

If you are a professional dog breeder and you have been asked to write a report on some of the problems associated with raising your breed of dog, you probably know a lot about the subject already. As a result, you will be able to produce the report based largely on information you have acquired over several years in the business, but you may still have to do a little research to verify dates, statistics, etc.

Often, however, you will have to write a report about a subject you know little or nothing about. Obviously, the first step is to inform yourself on the subject you must write about. Because you can only write effectively about things you know well, this means that you will have to find and learn the material yourself before you can pass it along to your audience. This kind of learning is called *research*.

The purpose of a research report is to clearly communicate what you have learned through your research to a *specific audience*.

Writing a research report is not difficult. If you can write a five-paragraph essay, you can write a report. Use the same six step writing process that you learned in Writing Paragraphs and Writing Longer Essays.

1. Prewriting...generating ideas...this is done as you are researching
2. Planning and Organizing.....method of development?
3. Writing/Drafting...a quick record of all your ideas
4. Revising....re-arranging, ideas, sentences, and paragraphs
5. Proofreading....correcting spelling, punctuation, grammar
6. Sharing/Publishing

The following steps can be used as a guideline for creating your research report.

## 1. SET UP A WORK SCHEDULE

Since you have three weeks to complete this research paper, it might be easy to delay starting your research and/or writing until the last minute. This is unacceptable and will result in a poor quality research report.

At the end of this module, you will find a chart to photocopy. Your instructor will help you create a reasonable work schedule. Start by filling in your due date and work backwards from that date until today.

**To assist you in writing your report, the rest of this module presents step by step instructions, along with examples which lead to an actual sample research report.**

## 2. CHOOSE/IDENTIFY A TOPIC

In the business world (as in the case of the employee asked to research the purchase of new computers), your subject and audience are usually assigned when you are asked to create the report. In other instances, you may be able to choose your own topic. For the purposes of this module, you will, however, begin with choosing a topic. Be sure that you pick something that interests you and that you will be able to find lots of information about in your school/public library or the community. For example, living in New Brunswick, it would probably be easier to find information on lobster fishing than on downhill skiing.

Brainstorm for *general* topics that interest you or that you would like to know more about. If you have trouble coming up with one of your own, here are some topics that might get you started.

- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Animals                            | 8. Education               |
| 2. Famous People                      | 9. A Country               |
| 3. The History of your Town or Region | 10. The Environment        |
| 4. Health                             | 11. A Business or Industry |
| 5. An important Local Issue           | 12. Local History          |
| 6. Vehicles                           | 13. Computers              |
| 7. Sports                             |                            |

If you are still having trouble, consult your instructor. Together, you will come up with topics that are of more interest. This is your chance to learn something new and quite possibly something that will be useful in your career. Think about your hobbies and interests; try to recall a recent conversation that raised questions in your mind. Perhaps you have a question about social studies class or science that you would like answered. Maybe you are curious about someone/something you have seen on TV. Another way to find a topic is browsing through an encyclopedia or dictionary. With a computer, you may be able to find a suitable topic on the Internet. A trip to a local library might also help you uncover a hidden interest. Choosing a topic should take no more than a day.

**STOP HERE! Do not proceed with this module until you have chosen a general topic that meets with your instructor's approval.**

*The topic chosen for the sample report used in this module is **health**.*

### **3. START RESEARCH/LIBRARY WORK**

Be sure you review your library skills before starting your research report. Identify as many places as you can where you might find information on your topic. Here are some suggestions.

- a) College library
- b) Public library
- c) Internet
- d) Friends and acquaintances (books owned by people you know)
- e) Government agencies (Health and Welfare, Industry Canada, etc.)
- f) Local professionals (lawyers, doctors, public health nurses)

**Make a list of all the places and people that you could consult in your research.**

#### 4. CLARIFY REPORT REQUIREMENTS, PURPOSE, AND AUDIENCE

Your finished research report should be **at least** 500 words long. You must include a title page and a Works Cited Page on which you list (using proper MLA format) the required information about the resources you have used.

Take some time to think about who your audience will be. Writing in a classroom situation is sometimes awkward because you do not have a *real live* audience. Although your instructor will read and mark your report, your *audience is not your instructor!* You must think of an individual or group who would logically read your report. Then, write it specifically for them. If you identify your audience clearly, you will find it much easier to write and research your report.

The amount of detail you include in the body depends on your purpose for writing as well as on the needs of your specific audience. For example, a report on a medical topic aimed at parents may contain many unfamiliar terms which need to be defined or explained. On the other hand, the same report designed for nursing students might not require any definitions at all.

If you are trying to write for “the general public”, you will find you will encounter a lot of problems.

*The purpose of the sample report is to inform a particular group about an interesting health issue.*

#### 5. READ TO NARROW THE TOPIC

Read several general articles about the topic you have chosen to help you decide which aspect of the subject you will focus on.

Let’s say you have chosen the general topic “Fishing”. As you learned in earlier modules, “fishing” is much too broad a topic. You must narrow it to make it more specific and easier to handle in a report of about 500-1000 words.

Begin by looking up the topic of fishing and reading about it in a couple of encyclopedias and some magazines. As you read, you will learn that there are many kinds of fishing: fresh water and salt water fishing, commercial and recreational

fishing, etc. You will see that there are many species of fish and each one has something special about it. Through your reading you decide that you would like to know more about *recreational salmon fishing*. Your next task is to run a quick check to make sure that you can find enough materials so you can do your research quite easily.

To guide your research and keep you focused as you work, think of six or seven questions you would like answered before you start to research. For example in the case of a report on a country like Belize, here are the kind of questions you might come up with:

Where is it?

How big is it?

How many people live there?

What are the major cities? Towns? Geographic areas?

What are the main industries/resources? How do most people make a living?

What is their culture like?

What is the history of the country? What kind of government does it have?

What is everyday life like for the average person?

What festivals do they have?

Begin by choosing a topic that interests you and then narrow it to something specific that can be covered in about 500-1000 words, that's probably about two to three pages (or 8 - 15 paragraphs) of typewritten work. You might have chosen

1. A country like Belize, Iceland, or Zaire;
2. An animal like the platypus, the manatee, or the spotted owl;
3. A disease or condition like Krone's disease, AIDS, or dyslexia;
4. A local historical event, industry, person;
5. The type and cost of a home computer.

*To narrow the sample topic of **health**, the writer looked through several magazines in the Community College library, looking particularly at their health sections. One article in Maclean's was rather frightening: the tragedies caused by the incorrect prescribing of certain drugs. Later on, in an issue of Prevention magazine, an article on the benefits of herbal medicine caught the writer's attention. From this information, the writer decided that herbal medicine that could be used to deal with stomach problems might be a topic with some possibilities.*

*Here are some hints on how to narrow your topic. Using the general topic of “Health” and the narrower area of “Herbal Medicine”, ask yourself some specific questions about the topic.*

<i>What kind of health (mental, physical, spiritual health?)</i>	<i>physical health</i>
<i>What about health?</i>	<i>my own health</i>
<i>What about my health</i>	<i>my digestion problem</i>

<i>What about my digestion problem?</i>	<i>find a cheap/safe treatment</i>
<i>What kind of treatment?</i>	<i>drugs or <b>herbs</b></i>
<i>What kind of herbs?</i>	<i>ones I can grow at home</i>
<i>Where can I find them?</i>	<i>?????? (don’t know yet)</i>
<i>What do I do with them?</i>	<i>?????? (don’t know yet)</i>

*So now the topic is narrowed properly to ....*

***herbs I can grow at home to relieve my indigestion***

**Narrow your chosen topic. Check with your instructor to make sure your topic is narrow enough for the assigned length.**

Now, that you have a narrowed topic, you should decide whether your research report will be *informative* or *persuasive*.

*The sample report will be **informative**.*

At this point, you have several important decisions to make. How much time should you take to complete the whole report? About 2-3 weeks should be sufficient. Because of the short time frame and the short length, you will have to narrow your topic a great deal. After all, 500-1000 words is only about three to five pages and there are hundreds, probably, thousands of books and pamphlets you could consult on the general topic.

Perhaps you don’t know a lot about the subject you have chosen and narrowed. You will, therefore, have to do some research to learn the information you need to put in your report.

**Photocopy the schedule at the end of this module and fill it in. This will help you make the best use of your time and allow you to produce your best work.**

## 6. CREATE A PRELIMINARY OR RESEARCH QUESTION

Turning your “limited topic” into a question often makes your research easier to handle.

*Here’s a possible question related to herbal medicine that could be used to get started on the herbal medicine topic.*

*What kind of herbs can I grow at home that will help my indigestion?  
How do I grow them and how do I prepare them for use?*

**Create a question that will guide your research.**

## 7. DRAFT A PRELIMINARY THESIS STATEMENT

Like any other piece of writing, the topic sentence (thesis statement) must clearly control the ideas you will include in your report. You may need to revise this thesis statement many times throughout the writing process. In fact, many writers suggest that you begin with a “working thesis statement”. This means that you write the best sentence you can at the beginning of the writing process, but you understand that you will probably have to make major changes in it after you have written the first draft of your report.

*Here is a sample “working thesis statement”.*

***Herbal medicine offers many benefits to the home gardener, especially those looking for an effective and inexpensive treatment for indigestion.***

*This thesis statement presents the topic clearly: herbal medicine. It also includes the ideas that these are effective and cheap remedies for indigestion. Those are the main ideas that the writer intends to research and write about.*

**Draft a “working thesis statement” based on your narrowed topic and research question**

## **8. RESEARCH AND TAKE NOTES ON YOUR QUESTION**

Where can you look for answers to your question?

Most people think about libraries and encyclopedias first. Of course, they are good sources of information, but there are some less obvious places to look for information.

### **a. *PRIMARY SOURCES***

Primary sources are first hand materials. If you speak to someone who is an expert, the information he/she provides is considered to be from a primary source. You might make a trip to a local health food store and write down the names of several kinds of tablets that are supposed to relieve indigestion. At the same time, you might talk to the owner of the store and ask questions. What kind of questions might you ask? What kind of information might you receive? You should always take pencil and paper with you when you are doing research so that you can record the information accurately. In the case of the health food store, you should write down the date of your visit, the name of the store, the name of the person you talked to, the information you gathered. You will need to keep this information carefully because you will need it to write your report and to create your bibliography.

Another primary source for information on herbal medicine might be the local gardening centre or nursery. A local garden club member might know something about growing herbs. Sometimes senior citizens have a wealth of knowledge about herbal medicines as do some native people. Maybe your grandmother has a “special guaranteed remedy” for indigestion. Wherever you go, whoever you talk to, be sure to ask questions and keep good notes.

Primary sources also include writings by an original author. For example, an article by the horror writer, Stephen King, about his experiences growing wildflowers would be a primary source (if you had determined that King really knew what he was talking about). Surveys and studies can also provide primary sources.

From a trip to the Margot's Health Food Store, the writer learned from a pamphlet put out by the Herbal Village that the following plants can offer some relief from stomach ailments.

Allspice	use as a digestive aid and natural antioxidant
Anise Seed	useful for nausea and indigestion
Basil	helps reduce nausea
Bay Leaf	helps gas, indigestion and headaches
Caraway Seed	for indigestion and gas
Coriander	benefits stomach ache
Dill	settles the stomach, also for gas, colic, hiccoughs
Fennel	soothes the stomach, or colic, and indigestion
Ginger	is used for upset stomachs and nausea
Lemon Balm	calms the stomach
Lemon Grass	helps diarrhea
Lemon Verbena	soothes the stomach and relieves gas
Peppermint	soothes the stomach
Rosemary	soothes the stomach
Savory	helps diarrhea
Saffron	benefits digestion, colds and stomach distress
Tarragon	diuretic, aids digestion
Thyme	for respiratory and digestive problems

***b. SECONDARY SOURCES***

In your conversations with primary sources, you may have found a number of natural products that can be used for indigestion. Next you should check out some secondary sources. Secondary sources are usually found in books and consist of articles and opinions about a subject. Begin to broaden your knowledge about herbal remedies by looking in encyclopedias, dictionaries, the Internet and other source books. You might also get useful books and pamphlets from a public health nurse, a nutritionist, or a pharmacist.

Here are some suggestions on how to locate secondary sources.

I) Libraries

Where are the libraries in your community?

- a) public library
- b) high school library
- c) community college library
- d) professional libraries (in government offices, etc.)
- e) personal libraries (your friends, teachers, neighbours, etc.)

As you have learned in the module, Research Skills, a library's reference section usually includes encyclopedias on both general and specific subjects. A big library will also have many indexes and databases such as Books in Print, Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Libraries today even have collections of CD-ROMs that you can use. Remember, wherever you find information, be sure to record the following information.

- the authors' full names
- complete title of the books
- the publishers' name
- the places of publication
- and the dates of publication
- the page number(s) where you located the information
- the exact quotations you want to use.

It is also a good idea to record the ISBN number of each book. This information is usually found on the back of the title page.

Now is the time to use the research skills you have already learned. For each book or source you consult, create a "Source Card(s). If you take several pieces of information from one book, you will need a "Source Card" for each fact or quotation you record. Each card should carry a heading that lists the author's name, the title, the publisher, the year of publication and the place of publication, as well as the page number where you found the information. If it seems like too big a job to record this information on every card, ask your instructor to explain how to create and use a numerical master list of sources.

## ii) On Line Resources

The Internet, accessible through a computer at your local Community Access Site, is a vast storehouse of information on many subject. You can find information on the “net” that has been provided by government agencies, manufacturers, associations, and just plain “folks”. To find information that you can view online, download to a disk, or print, you should be familiar with “search engines” like Excite, Yahoo, Webcrawler, AltaVista, etc. Simply type in a key word relating to the information you are looking for in the dialogue box in the Search Engine. Then click with the mouse button to start the search. Before long, you will get a list of possible matches. Always remember to keep notes. You should record the day, time, URL, author and title of anything you think you might use. Your Internet sources should also be recorded on “Source Cards”, and should include the author (if available), the title of the page (in quotation marks), the title of the site (underlined), the publication medium (Online), the date of access, and the electronic address, or URL.

Grieve, Mrs. M. “Botanical.com: A Modern Herbal.” Botanical.com. Online. 2 May 1997. <http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/mgmh.html>

*On the Internet, the writer found several detailed “pages” on the planting, cultivation, and preparation of various herbs. (See Appendix 1...Resources)*

## iii) Community Resources

Your community has many other helpful resources too. If you are looking for public records, you may find them at the City Hall or the Court House. Other sources of information are community service workers, social services agencies, school teachers, religious leaders, and coordinators of non-profit groups.

The writer of the sample essay in this module met a local school teacher at a volunteer meeting. The teacher believed strongly in the healing properties of herbs and grew a wide selection in her garden. When asked for information on herbal medicine, the teacher invited the writer to visit her home and check out her garden and have a look at some of her books. A copy of the notes the writer took on the visit can be found in Appendix A.

## A Note About Using Resources

As you search for information, you should decide which information is valid and which is not. For example, not all Internet sources are reliable because, unlike book publishers, no one is responsible for checking the accuracy of facts and other information.

For some research topics, the information needs to be up-to-date to be useful. Always check the date of publication if current information is required for that topic. For example, a report on current New Brunswick industries based on sources from the 1970s would not be accurate.

You will probably end up with more information than you can possibly use for your report. Decide which material is most relevant to your topic, which is too general, and which is too specific. Also figure out which information is up-to-date enough to use.

## 9. TAKE NOTES

An easy, efficient way to take notes is to use 3"x 5" file cards. Each card records the author's name, title of the book, publisher, date and place of publication along with an exact quote and the page number of the material you want to use. If the information is too long or too complicated to quote directly, you can also write a summary of the idea or the concept you have just learned about and put it on your file card.

### **AVOID PLAGIARISM**

**Plagiarism occurs when writers fail to document the source of words or ideas that they have read about and then used in their own work. This is really a kind of stealing or theft. When you copy someone else's work or words out of a book, you are stealing their ideas. It is as wrong to steal ideas as it is to steal from a store or bank.**

**Plagiarism in any academic institution is severely punished. It can result in either dismissal from a program or a "zero" on that assignment.**

As you do your research, write down everything you gather. In the case of short pieces of information, you can copy the text exactly.

Be sure to record the information you will need later about the author, title etc. This information on your primary and/or secondary sources will be assembled into an alphabetical list of all the material you consulted while you wrote your research report. This list is printed on the last page of your report and is called a *bibliography* or *works cited* page.

**Start your research now! Try to find information from at least three different kinds of sources.**

Now that your research is completed, you must spend some time organizing your information so that you can present it in a logical and interesting way to the group of readers you have already identified.

## 10. PLAN THE RESEARCH ESSAY

The planning stages of the research essay are essentially the same as the planning stages of the five-paragraph essay.

First clarify your purpose. Look at your research questions again.

**What kind of herbs can I grow at home that will help my indigestion?**

**How do I grow them and how do I prepare them for use?**

The research question suggests that your purpose is to *inform* a group of people who already have gardens about the kinds of herbs they can grow that will provide them with an effective, cheap stomach remedy.

Why should your audience only be people who already garden?

The reason is simple: in less than 1000 words, you don't have the time or space to tell the audience all the things that "brand new" gardeners would need to know to be successful. In this report, you will only have time to provide an experienced gardener with the growing and preparation information.

What method of development seems best suited to accommodate all the information cards you have created?

*The best method of development in the sample report is probably **classification**. The writer will pick several different kinds of herbs and write a section on each one*

of them. Within the section devoted to each herb, the writer could easily use **chronological (or logical)** order to arrange the information from identifying the plants, to preparing the soil, growing the herbs, and making the medicines.

Here are some questions that may help eliminate some of the extra information gathered for the sample report.

How many herbs were identified that help stomach ailments? How many are specific for indigestion? How many grow in your climate?

Think back to the basic five-paragraph essay structure. How many body paragraphs are there? Three. How many different kinds of herbs do you think you should write about? Three is probably the minimum (although you could deal with a few more).

Will simply naming and describing the herbs give you 500-1000 words? Probably not. What other kind of information do you think the reader might need or want? Look at the basic research question. What other areas might be included in the report? The reader would certainly need information on how to grow the herbs and how to prepare the herbs to use as medicine.

What other information might be useful? First, a description of the plant in detail and perhaps even providing a colour picture would help the reader identify the plant for him/herself. Perhaps some history about the plant might make your report more interesting. Finally, information about how effective the plant is might be useful to the reader. All or part of this information could easily be included in the report.

**Now it's time to prepare some kind of outline or organizational chart of how you will present the information.**

In Appendix A, you will find copies of the resource material gathered on the topic of herbal medicine and stomach troubles. This material forms the basis for the rest of this module.

## **11. DRAFT A WORKING OUTLINE**

A preliminary outline of the information gathered is presented in Appendix . Much of the material consulted was already organized under various headings. As you go through the research process, pay attention to the headings under which your topic is presented. You may find that you can use the same method of organization and headings as one of your resources does.

In this case, the Internet material on herbs seemed to be best organized to meet the needs of the experienced gardener who might be planting herbs for the first time. Notice how the resource material takes the reader through the growing process, one step at a time.

## INTRODUCTION

**grabber** (creates interest) *Want to beat the high cost of buying stomach medicines?*

**thesis statement** (main idea) *Many common herbs can be used to cure indigestion.*

**blueprint statement** (provides outline) *You can easily plant thyme, peppermint and sage in your garden*

## BODY

### 1. Yarrow

types

description

cultivation

medicinal actions and uses

preparation and doses

### 2. Peppermint

types

description

cultivation

medicinal actions and uses

preparation and doses

### 3. Dill

types

description

cultivation

medicinal uses

preparation and doses

### 4. Burdock

types

description

cultivation

medicinal uses

preparation and doses

## CONCLUSION SUMMARY PERSONAL COMMENTARY

You can easily see that you will need more than 5 paragraphs to record all the information you have found on herbs and indigestion. In fact, it is possible that each of the subheadings (types, description, cultivation, etc.) could require one paragraph.

Writing a draft outline will help you organize your main ideas, arrange the major and minor details you want to include, and identify materials that really doesn't belong in your report. In addition, outlining will help you clarify just exactly what you want to say.

**Create a draft outline now. Submit it to your instructor for comments. Your outline forms part of your final mark for this module.**

Your instructor will review your draft outline and make suggestions about how to change and adjust your ideas. At this stage of the process, you will probably discover that some of the information you have gathered does not apply. Similarly, you are likely to find that you need more information on certain parts of your presentation. To find the new information you need, you will have to go back to your research sources or identify new ones.

Once the new information is gathered and incorporated into your working outline you are ready to write the first draft of your report. Read the information on pages 36 and 37 before you start to write.

## **12. WRITE THE FIRST DRAFT**

If you have done a thorough and conscientious job preparing your *working outline*, writing the first draft is a relatively easy task.

Choose a comfortable location where you can work undisturbed for an hour or two. Be sure to assemble all the tools you will need: paper, pens, etc.

Using your outline and research notes as a guide, start writing up your first draft.

Record your purpose in writing and your audience before you begin.

Write on every other line.

Refine your topic sentence once more.

Do not be judgmental about your work as you write.

Follow your *working outline* and turn each subtopic and idea into a good sentence.

Write the entire report from beginning to end in one sitting, if possible.

Do not worry too much about spelling, grammar, and punctuation at this point.

Pause briefly, from time to time, through the writing to refocus on your purpose and audience.

Set your first draft aside for at least 24 hours.

**Write the first draft of your research report now. Submit it to your instructor for comments and suggestions.**

*A sample rough draft can be found in Appendix B...Rough Draft 1*

### **13. REWORK THE THESIS STATEMENT (if necessary)**

After you have left your writing for a day or two, return to it and read it through from beginning to end in one sitting. As you read, ask yourself if all the information you presented relates to your topic/thesis statement. If not, you may have to rewrite your thesis statement so that it does cover everything you have said.

Perhaps you will have to delete some unnecessary material. Also ask yourself,

*Does my thesis statement still work for the kind of information I have included?*

*Does my blueprint statement provide a good road map to all the points I intend to cover?*

*Does my grabber really grab?*

*The writer of the sample report discovered on rereading the first draft that the information included for each herb dealt more with describing the herbs and their uses than on instructions for growing them. As a result, the revision required a*

*new thesis statement that covered only those areas. Compare the opening paragraphs of draft 1 and draft 2.*

#### **14. FILL IN ANY GAPS IN RESEARCH**

Once you have reread your report and carefully re-examined your thesis statement, you may need to do a little more research to fill in one or more of your supports more effectively.

#### **15. REVISE FOR CONTENT AND STRUCTURE**

Another thing that you may discover as you reread your report is that some of the details and supports are not in the right order or that you have left out some important ideas. You may even identify whole sentences or paragraphs that really do not belong in the essay because they are not covered in the thesis statement.

*In the sample report, the writer decided to change the herbs discussed because there was better information available on Yarrow, Fennel, Dill, and Mint. Also, it was obvious that the details included in the first draft needed to be reorganized so that the description, growing locations, etc. were presented in the same order for each herb. Check closely the changes made between the first and second draft to get a good understanding of what revising for content and structure includes. See Appendices B and C.*

As you rearrange the ideas, sentences, and paragraphs in your report, you are taking part in the revising process. It is normal for a report to undergo four or five revisions before it is ready for an audience.

Remember the key to good writing is rewriting. Have a friend, classmate, or instructor read your report at this stage. Be sure to tell them that you need their honest opinion about how interesting they find it, how logical they find the development, how persuasive the report seems.

As your friend or instructor reads it, watch his/her face. If you see your reader look puzzled or go back and reread something, you have probably discovered a place that needs some rewriting.

Here are some questions to ask yourself.

*Could a reader who knows little about the topic follow my arguments?*

*Will the reader need more details or explanations to understand my points more easily?*

*Do all of my supports make sense?*

*See Appendix C: Draft 2 for samples of the changes made during various revisions of the report. Notice how many of the details about each herb have been reorganized so that each section is organized in the same way. (e.g. description, history, uses)*

**Submit your revised essay along with your original draft to your instructor for comments before proceeding.**

## 16. DEVELOP A WORKS CITED PAGE

As you work on your final revisions, start preparing your Works Cited (or Bibliography) page. Gather up all your research notes and record all the sources from which you took quotes or ideas. If you created a master list for your research, most of your work is already done.

Use a reliable copy of the bibliography format your instructor or school demands. Most English papers are written using the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

**While your instructor is reading and commenting on your revised report, prepare a bibliography.**

*See Appendix D for sample Works Cited Page*

## 17. PROOFREADING FOR MECHANICAL ERRORS

Although you have probably been correcting spelling, punctuation, and sentence errors as you moved through your revisions, you should give your report to at least one final reading in which you look *only* for grammatical and spelling errors. Most writers also proofread their work at least once looking *only* for sentence faults.

If you have typed your report on the computer, you should use the Spell Checker, and the Grammar Checker. Do not, however, rely on them to find all the errors. Spell Checkers only identify words that do not exist. If you meant to type *from* and you typed *form* instead, the Spell Checker won't find it as an error. If you use a Grammar Checker, ask your instructor to help you understand the messages it sends.

The best way to check for mechanical errors is to read your text aloud. You are more likely to spot problems this way than if you read silently.

**Proofread your paper at least twice.**

## **18. SUBMIT YOUR WORK FOR PEER COMMENT**

It is always useful to get at least two more people to proofread your report before you submit it to your boss or instructor. It is extremely difficult to eliminate all the errors yourself. There is nothing wrong with getting help with the revision and proofreading part of the writing process. In fact, professional writers do it all the time.

## **19. FINAL REVISION AND PREPARATION OF FINAL COPY**

Prepare the final copy of your report. Be sure to find out and follow all the rules for formatting a report required by your instructor or company. Create an appropriate title. Take special care that you prepare an appropriate title page/cover page with all the information requested by your boss or instructor. Check that all pages have the "right-sized" margins, and that all your sources are listed alphabetically on the Works Cited Page.

*See Appendix D for the final copy of the sample report. Please submit your finished report to your instructor for marking. Spend some time comparing all three versions of the sample report, so you will understand the kinds of changes that have been made.*

**PREPARE THE FINAL COPY AND SUBMIT THE FINAL COPY OF YOUR INFORMAL RESEARCH REPORT FOR MARKING**

## CHECK SHEET FOR REPORT WRITING

<b>Research Report Writing Tasks</b>	<b>Days I can Work on Task</b>	<b>Date Due</b>	<b>Task Complete</b>
1. Set work schedule/timetable			
2. Identify General Topic			
3. Start Library Work			
4. Clarify Document Requirements, Purpose, Audience			
5. Read to Narrow Topic			
6. Create Preliminary Question			
7. Begin Research and Notetaking			
8. Draft Working Outline			
9. Continue Research and Notetaking and Outlining			
10. Write First Draft			
11. Rework Thesis Statement (if necessary)			
12. Fill In Any Gaps in Research			
13. Revise for Structure			
14. Develop Works Cited Page			
15. Proofread for Mechanical Errors			
16. Read, revise, and proofread again (at least twice)			
17. Submit for peer comment			
18. Final revision and preparation of final copy			
19. Submit for Marking			

## GUIDELINES FOR REPORT AND ESSAY WRITING

Reports are factual and so there is little room for your own opinions. In general, reports follow all the rules of essay writing and should include the following:

1. **Point of View:** Reports are always written with an anonymous voice in the third person. Although your first draft may begin, “I am writing this report to help you figure out how to shop for a new computer.” It must be revised to read “Shopping for a new computer will be simple if you follow these guidelines.” (Occasionally a casual report may start with an anecdote<sup>1</sup>)
  
2. **Transitions:** Strong and frequent transitions are required to support the logical and smooth development of your facts. Readers need help to see how you are moving through and developing your ideas. Use words and phrases like *The first consideration is..... Another area to investigate includes..... The most important element is.....(importance order)*  
*In the beginning..... Later..... Finally (chronological order)*  
*On one hand... On the other hand... In conclusion.....(comparison/contrast)*  
 Transitions should be used to show the connection between major parts of the paper as well as to show the relationship between ideas within a paragraph.
  
3. **Revise to eliminate these problem areas.**
  - a) **Active voice in most of the verbs you write makes your writing stronger and clearer. For example:**  
*The country was run by a military dictatorship until 1976.*  
 should be revised to read.  
*A military dictatorship ran the country until 1976.*
  
  - The grammar modules in this course (or any English textbook) will be useful if further explanation is required.
  - b) **Unnecessary words and phrases slow the reader down. For example:**  
*At that point in time* should be replaced *then*  
*Modern students of today .... Students today* or *Modern students join together ... join* (join already includes the idea of together)

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<sup>1</sup> A short narrative often used as a part of the introduction as a “grabber”. These may use first or third person point of view.

*refer back ... refer* (refer already includes the idea of back)  
Phrases like *red in colour, plan ahead, basic essentials, attach together, small in size* also need revision.

- c) Avoid clichés like *white as snow, dark as night, cold as ice*
  - d) Be decisive. Avoid verbs like *seems, appears, etc.*
  - e) Sentence variety makes your work smoother and more interesting. Check to make sure you have used an appropriate assortment of simple, compound, complex, and compound complex sentences
4. Footnotes, endnotes and parenthetical reference: If you use statistics, quotations or even someone else's ideas in your writing you must give them credit. To methods are acceptable.
- Footnotes:** Place a small number (like this<sup>2</sup>) beside the information you are crediting. Draw a line at the bottom of that page, record the appropriate footnote number and then add the source information so it looks exactly like this: Author's name, Book title underlined (place of publication: publisher's name, date of publication), page number.  
e.g. John R. Smith, My Book (Toronto: Everyday Publishers, 1995), p. 2
- Endnotes:** place the book or article information at the end of a chapter instead of at the bottom of the page.
- Parenthetical reference:** This method may be used instead of the two above and is often seen today. If the author's name appears in the sentence you wrote, simply added the page number for the source in brackets afterwards. If the author's name does not appear in your sentence, add the author's last name and the page in brackets afterwards. Include a shortened form of the title in the parenthetical reference only if you have used more than one book by the same author.
- e.g. Smith says, "Sixty-two percent of adult New Brunswickers are functionally illiterate." (64)  
"Sixty-two percent of adult New Brunswickers are functionally illiterate." (Smith 64)  
"Sixty-two percent of adult New Brunswickers are functionally illiterate." (Book 64)
5. Bibliography: If you have used footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical

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<sup>2</sup> This is called superscript and is used to number your footnotes.

references, you must also give credit in a list of sources at the end of your report. This list is called a bibliography or a works cited page. Without giving credit to your sources, you are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism is illegal. At work, it may be cause for immediate dismissal; in the classroom, it may result in a failing paper or discontinuance from the program. Anything considered common knowledge does not need to be cited. For more information on plagiarism as well as formats for bibliographies, consult the module on Research Skills as well as any good English text or handbook.

6. **Final presentation:** To make your report look attractive, write neatly in pen or type. Leave a margin of at least one inch (2.5 cm) all the way around each page. Make sure the paper is clean and unwrinkled. The text should be completely free of any errors or corrections. Your facilitator or employer may have his/her own special requirements for presenting a research report, be sure to follow these guidelines.

Every research report that you write should contain all of the items just discussed, but there are a few extras that might consider adding to your work.

1. **Title page:** A separate title page can make your report look professional and seem more appealing to the reader. It should include the title, the author's name and the date of submission, arranged according to the rules set down by your instructor or employer.
2. **Charts and Illustrations:** These are often included in a report to make it more visually appealing. Charts help make explanations easier to understand and pictures break up a page full of text so that it appears less boring.
3. **Recommendations:** Although most reports usually end with a traditional summary, some business reports conclude with a simple list of recommendations. (This is usually the only place in the report where an opinion may be included.)
4. **Section headings:** These are like chapter titles, and they work to help guide the reader through the support areas you present. They are usually printed in bold (dark) type, underlined, and reflect the blueprint statement in the introduction. In some cases, they may be numbered. If you decide to use numbered headings, follow this format.

- I (Roman numerals) - major headings
  - A (Capital letters) - subheadings
    - 1. (Arabic numbers) - divisions of subheadings
      - i (Small letters) - subdivisions
      - ii
      - iii
    - 2.
      - i
      - ii
  - B
    - 1
    - 2
    - 3
- II
  - A
  - B
  - C

APPENDIX A  
RESEARCH RESOURCES

**Transcript of meeting with local gardener.**

- grows more than 30 herbs
- useful for colds, general good health, headaches, fevers
- started when she was first married 1974
- buys herbs from grower in Nova Scotia
- cautions about informed use of herbs...they can be as dangerous as drugs
- her favourites are feverfew, thyme, dill, yarrow, chamomile, members of the mint family
- she recommends peppermint for indigestion
- says it's much more effective than store bought versions
- most herbs are easy to grow
- don't require too much care.

She also gave the writer a couple of books on how to grow herbs, but after skimming them it appeared that the information was very similar to that acquired on the Internet.

## **APPENDIX B**

### The First Draft

## The First Draft

Herbal medicine offers many benefits to the home gardener, especially for those looking for an effective and inexpensive treatment for indigestion. With today's rushed eating patterns of "squat and gobble" at the office, at home or at the fast food restaurant, more and more people in today's busy life style are complaining about gas, indigestion, heartburn, and stomach troubles. The best answer might be to change our eating habits to something healthier, but that isn't always possible in today's busy world. Medicines and remedies bought at the drug store are getting more expensive and you often read that these medicines have bad side effects. For these reasons, it is a good idea to investigate common herbs. Many of these plants have healing properties and grow well in our gardens (and in the fields near our houses).

Yarrow is the first example that comes to my mind. Yarrow has a rough angular stem with many long narrow leaves which have a feathery appearance. You may not recognize this name but it is sometimes called Milfoil, Old man' Pepper, Soldier's Woundwort, Devil's Plaything. It has been used for centuries and was even a salad ingredient in the seventeenth century. In the olden days it was supposed to bring a vision of a future husband or wife if you wrapped it in flannel and put it under your pillow after repeating the following words

'Thou pretty herb of Venus's tree,  
Thy true name it is Yarrow;  
Now who my bosom friend must be,  
Pray tell thou me tomorrow'

*Halliwel's Popular Rhymes*

Some people say that it is good for stopping nosebleeds and others say it causes them and thus relieves a headache.

"Yarrow grows in Britain, Scandanavia, Europe, and all over the United States

except for the extreme south.” (Duff, 132) Most people think of it as a weed and it is often found along the edge of fields or along country roads. It grows well wherever grass would grow. The plant flowers in July and August. It is best to gather it when the flowers are just opening. Gail Duff in her book “The CountrySide Cookbook” recommends, “For drying and using medicinally, cut and hang up the whole plants. When they are dry, crumble the leaves and flowers and store them in light air tight containers.

Yarrow can be used for cuts and scrapes, severe colds, poor circulation, and even varicose veins but if you want to use it for indigestion, you should infuse 10 ml (2 teaspoons) of chopped fresh flowers in 250 ml (8 fl oz) boiling water for 10 minutes. Strain. Drink the whole amount twice a day between meals.

Another common plant that can be used to relieve indigestion is fennel. Fennel has a base that looks somewhat like celery. It grows long feathery branches that look a little like asparagus and has yellow flowers which bloom in July and August. It can grow to more than 4 or 5 feet in height. It originally grew mostly in Europe especially along the Mediterranean coast and is still popular with Italians. It grows well in dry soil (sometimes chalky) near the sea or on river banks.

Fennel has been used for centuries to improve eyesight, and prevent witchcraft, and give long life, strength and courage. An old English verse tells of its property to heal eyes.

“Whaune the hedder (adder) is hurt in eye  
 Ye red fenel is hus prey,  
 and yif he move it fynde  
 Wonderly he doth hisy kynde.  
 He schall it chow wonderly,  
 And leyn it to hys eye kindly,  
 Ye jows shall sang and hely ye eye  
 Yat befor was sicke et feye.”

Longfellow, the American poet, also talks about fennel.

“Above the lower plants it towers,  
The Fennel with its yellow flowers;  
And in an earlier age than ours  
Was gifted with the wondrous powers  
Lost vision to restore.

It was often used as a vegetable and in medicines during Anglo-Saxon times.

The roots of fennel used to be used for medicine but now fruits and seeds are more often used. In general, an oil is processed from the plant by placing in warm water or alcohol. The smell of fennel is fragrant and “its taste is warm and sweet” (grieve) Because of its pleasant smell and its ability to relieve gas in the intestines it is often one of the main ingredients in Gripe Water, a medicine used to relieve colic in babies. As a tea, made by pouring hot water over bruised fennel seeds, it is said to relieve gas and indigestion. It can also be used for chronic coughs. Culpepper an expert on medicinal herbs says, “The leaves, or rather the seeds, boiled in water, stayeth the hiccup and taketh away nausea or inclination to sickness.”

Dill is another garden herb that can be useful as a medicine. It is an annual that grows naturally in the Mediterranean region and in southern Russia. It grows all over Europe and North America too. It was mentioned in the Bible and throughout the Middle Ages. At that time it was used by magicians in their spells and in charms against witchcraft.

The plant grows to about 2 1/1 feet in high is very much like fennel. It has the feathery leaves and yellow flowers. the fruits or seeds are very plentiful. They are strong smelling and bitter to taste. It is easy to grow. It should be planted from seed in the spring and needs to be thinned out later on to make sure each plant grows well. when it ocmes time to harvest the dill it should be done early in the morning or late at night and you should be careful not to shake it or the tiny seeds will be lost. The seeds should be dried in the sun or in a moderate oven. Then you can make an oil by soaking the seeds in either boiling water or alcohol.

Although most people think of dill as a flavouring, it is also useful in treating some forms of indigestion. It is often administered to adults as 5 drops of oil of dill on sugar or in a preparation called Dill Water useful for infants with gas problems.

Spearmint, peppermint, and pennyroyal, members of the mint family, also can have a positive effect on stomach disorders. Spearmint is a common garden mint which originated in the Mediterranean regions. Mint has been known and used at least since the time of the Romans when they put it in milk to prevent it from curdling or to scent their bath water and perfume their bodies.

Mint grows well in moist soil in semi-sun. The plant is perrenianl and can at times become a nuisance weed if not kept well confined. The plants stand about 2 feet tall, have wrinkled pointy leaves with finely toothed edges. The small flowers

are arranged in a circle at the top of the stalk in tapering spikes which are usually pink or lilac in colour. The taste and smell of the plant, especially when the leaves are crushed is unmistakable.

When the plants start to bloom, it is time to cut the stalks a couple of inches off the ground on a dry day after the dew has disappeared and before the sun gets too hot. It can be dried for use in the kitchen by tying the stems loosely into bunches and hanging them to dry. The leaves should be stripped from the stems as soon as they are dry and rubbed into a fine powder and stored in air tight containers. If spearmint is being grown for medicine, the shoots should be gathered in August when just coming into flower. The oils used in medicines should be extracted as soon as possible after the plant is cut. The leaves when eaten help the digestion by making meat fibers easier to digest. The oils stimulate the digestive system.

Peppermint, or brandy mint as it is sometimes called, is the most common herb used for indigestion. The plant is common everywhere in Europe and North America growing in moist shady spots. The plant also grows to about 2 feet in height. The flowers are whorls of little reddish violet flowers near the top of the stem. The whole plant has a special smell because of the oils it contains. When you taste it is hot at first and produces a sensation of cold. History reports that Greeks and Romans crowned themselves with Peppermint at their festivals and used it to flavour

their favourite dished. There is even some evidence that peppermint was used by the Egyptians. Liberal fertilization, in the form of manure is essential. Nitrate of soda and potash are also really important if the plants are to be healthy and produce a good quality of oil for medicines. Peppermint also requires lots of water as it grows. Although the soil should be well drained it must remain constantly moist.

The mint is cut just before flowering from the end of July to August. It should be cut on a dry sunny day, in the late morning when all the dew has disappeared. The cut plants should be crushed quickly while fresh to ensure that the peppermint oil is of the best quality. The leaves can also be cut and dried for two or three days.

Peppermint oil is widely used for all sorts of stomach ailments, because, it more than any other oil can act against stomach spasms and relieves pain in the intestines.. It is also helpful for gas, colic, cramping, and diarrhoea. Oil of Peppermint can be used to reduce nausea and is sometimes used to make other drugs taste better. Boiled in milk and drunk hot, it is good for stomach pains. Because of its anaesthetic effect on the stomach, it can be used to prevent seasickness.

Indigestion is often a problem for a lot of people and a lot of money is spent on remedies at the drugstore. Many plants can be used to ease the symptoms of indigestion and you can grow them in your garden or find them in fields near your

home. They are easy to find and it is easy to produce a medicine that will relieve your problems. Why don't you start learning about herbs and you will see just how useful they can be.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **The Second Draft**

## SECOND DRAFT

With today's fast food "squat and gobble" eating patterns more and more busy people are complaining of gas, indigestion, heartburn and stomach troubles. The best answer might be to change their eating habits, but that isn't always possible in today's fast paced world. Instead they swallow name brand antacids and hope for some relief. There is another option, however. Herbal medicine has been part of human life for thousands of years and it still offers us many health benefits, especially for those looking for an effective treatment of indigestion. Various parts of the plant may be processed or an oil may be distilled from them which are used for a variety of medicines.

Yarrow is a good example of a common plant that has healing properties. It has a rough angular stem with many long narrow leaves which have a feathery appearance. The plant flowers in July and August and produces white or pale lilac flowers which look like tiny daisies. "Yarrow grows in Britain, Scandinavia, Europe, and all over the United States except for the extreme south." (Duff, 132) Most people think of it as a weed because it is often found along the edge of fields or along country roads, but it grows well anywhere that grass will grow.

You may not recognize the name Yarrow, but it is also called Milfoil, Old Man's Pepper, Soldier's Woundwort, or Devil's Plaything. It has been used for

centuries to make an ointment for wounds. Some people say that Achilles used it to stop his soldiers' bleeding wounds during the Trojan Wars. During the Middle Ages, it was thought that would bring a vision of a future husband and wife if wrapped some yarrow in a flannel cloth, and placed it under the pillow, while repeating the following words.

'Thou prestty herb of Venus's tree,  
Thy true name it is Yarrow;  
Now who my bosom friend must be,  
Pray tell thou me to-morrow.'

Halliwell's Popular Rhymes

In the seventeenth century yarrow was used as a salad ingredient. Today it is used for severe colds, to open pores and improve the complexion, for cuts and scrapes and for indigestion. One source even suggests that it helpful for varicose veins. (Duff, 133)

For severe colds, it is recommended that an infusion (tea) be made by pouring one pint of boiling water over 1 oz of the dried herb. As relief from indigestion, a cup of boiling water should be poured over two teaspoons of chopped fresh flowers and allowed to steep for 10 minutes. This should be drunk twice a day between meals. "For drying and using medicinally," Gail Duff's *The CountrySide Cookbook* recommends, "cut[ting] and hang[ing] the whole plant. When they are dry, crumble the leaves and flowers and store them in air tight containers."

Another common plant, fennel can be used to relieve a variety of common problems. Fennel has a base that looks somewhat like celery and it can grow to more than 4 or 5 feet in height. It has long feathery branches that look a little like asparagus and yellow flowers which bloom in July and August. Originally, it grew mostly in Europe especially along the Mediterranean coast, but today it is grown in North America too.

Fennel grows well in dry chalky soil near the sea or on river banks. It likes sunny places and does not need much fertilizer although it grows better on stiff rich soil. “The bright golden flowers...are in bloom in July and August. The smell of fennel is fragrant and “its taste is warm and sweet” (Grieve)

Fennel has been used for centuries to improve eyesight and treat digestive problems. The Romans liked to eat the fruits and edible shoots. They also believed that it could prevent witchcraft, and give long life, strength and courage. An old English verse tells of its property to heal problems associated with the eyes.

“Whaune the hedder (adder) is hurt in eye  
 Ye red fenel is hys prey,  
 and yif he mowe it fynde  
 Wonderly he doth hsy kynde.  
 He schall it chow wonderly,  
 And leyn it to hys eye kindly,  
 Ye jows shall sang and hely ye eye  
 Yat befor was sicke et feye.”

During Anglo-Saxon times, it was used as both a vegetable and a medicine.

In 1640, Parkinson wrote about fennel saying,

The leaves, seede and rootes are both meate and medicine; the Italians especially doe much delight in the use thereof, and therefore transplant and whiten it, it make it more tender to please the taste, which being sweete and somewhat hot helpeth to digest the crude qualitie of fish and other viscous meats. We use it to lay upon fish or to boyle it thereweith and with divers other things, as also the seeds in bread and other things.

Longfellow, the American poet, also talks about fennel.

“Above the lower plants it towers,  
The Fennel with its yellow flowers;  
And in an earlier age than ours  
Was gifted with the wondrous powers  
Lost vision to restore.

The roots of the fennel plant used to be used for medicine but now the fruits and seeds are more often used. Because of its pleasant smell and its ability to relieve gas in the intestines it is often one of the main ingredients in Gripe Water, a medicine used to relieve colic in babies. As a tea, made by pouring hot water over bruised fennel seeds, it is said to relieve gas and indigestion. It can also be used for chronic coughs. Culpepper an expert on medicinal herbs says, “The leaves, or rather the seeds, boiled in water, stayeth the hiccup and taketh away nausea or inclination to sickness.” It is used to ease sore eyelids by pouring boiling water

over 2oz of fennel seeds and then using the liquid produced to bathe the eyes. If one tablespoon of fennel seeds are crushed and then one cup of boiling water poured over them, pads can be dipped in the warm liquid and applied to inflamed eyelids

Dill is another garden herb that can be useful as a medicine. The plant grows to about 2 1/2 feet in height and has feathery leaves and yellow flowers. The fruits or seeds, which have a strong smell and a bitter taste, are very plentiful. Dill is an annual plant that should be planted from seed in the spring and needs to be thinned out later on to make sure each plant grows well. Although it is found naturally in the Mediterranean region and in southern Russia, it can be grown all over Europe and North America too.

Dill is mentioned in the Bible, and throughout the Middle Ages it was used by magicians in their spells and in charms against witchcraft. Culpepper, the herb expert wrote

Mercury has the dominion of this plant, and therefore to be sure it strengthens the brain....It stays the hiccough, being boiled in wine, and but smelled into being tied in a cloth. The seed is of more use than the leaves, and more effectual to digest raw and visous humours, and is used in medicines that serve to expel wind, the pains therefrom....

When dill is ready for harvest in the late summer, it should be done early in the morning or late at night. As well, it should be handled carefully so as not to shake it or else the tiny seeds will be lost. The seeds should be dried in the sun or in

a moderate oven. Then an oil be produced by soaking the seeds in either boiling water or alcohol.

Although most people think of dill as a flavouring in pickles, it is also useful in treating some forms of indigestion. It is often administered to adults as 5 drops of oil of dill on sugar or in a preparation called Dill Water useful for infants with gas problems.

Members of the mint family can also have a positive effect on stomach disorders. The many different kinds of mint share the same properties. All of them are used for medicines and all of them can be used to create sweet smelling oils. Mint has been known and used at least since the time of the Romans when they put it in milk to prevent it from curdling or to scent their bath water and perfume their bodies.

Spearmint plants, a well-known member of this family stands about 2 feet tall, have wrinkled pointy leaves with finely toothed edges. The small flowers are arranged in a circle at the top of the stalk in tapering spikes which are usually pink or lilac in colour. The taste and smell of the plant, especially when the leaves are crushed is unmistakable.

Spearmint should be harvested just as the flowers start to bloom by cutting the stalks a couple of inches off the ground on a dry day after the dew has

disappeared and before the sun gets too hot. It can then be dried for use in the kitchen by tying the stems loosely into bunches and hanging them to dry. The leaves should be stripped from the stems as soon as they are dry and rubbed into a fine powder and stored in air tight containers. If spearmint is being grown for medicine, the shoots should be gathered in August. The spearmint oils used in medicines should be extracted as soon as possible after the plant is cut. The leaves, when eaten, help the digestion by making meat fibers easier to digest because the oils in the plant stimulate the digestive system.

Peppermint, or brandy mint as it is sometimes called, is the most common member of the mint family used for indigestion. The plant is common everywhere in Europe and North America, and it grows well in moist shady spots. This plant also grows to about 2 feet in height and has whorls of little reddish violet flowers near the top of the stem. The whole plant has a special smell because of the oils it contains. Peppermint when first tasted seems hot, but then produces first and produces a sensation of cold. History reports that Greeks and Romans crowned themselves with Peppermint at their festivals and used it to flavour their favourite dishes. Peppermint may even have been used by the ancient Egyptians.

This member of the mint family grows best with lots of fertilizer, usually in the form of manure. Peppermint also requires lots of water as it grows, and nitrate

of soda and potash are also really important if the plants are to be healthy and produce a good quality of oil for medicines. Although the soil should be well drained it must remain constantly moist.

Peppermint should be cut just before it flowers from the end of July to August. It should be harvested on a dry sunny day, in the late morning when all the dew has disappeared. The cut plants should be crushed quickly while fresh to ensure that the peppermint oil is of the best quality. The leaves can also be cut and dried for two or three days.

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There is nothing mysterious or dangerous about any of these common plants. We use them everyday and see them regularly in gardens or along the roadside. They are easy to find and easy to grow. In general it is not hard to process them

into medicine and teas that will relieve many digestive problems. Learning to use herbs as medicines is not hard. Try it and you may find that you are making fewer trips to the drug store and that you have more money in your pocket.

**APPENDIX D**

**FINAL COPY**

## Herbs: A New Look at an Old Resource

Today's fast food "squat and gobble" eating patterns cause more and more busy people to complain of stomach troubles. The best answer might be to change our eating habits, but that isn't always possible in our fast-paced world. Instead everyone swallows name brand antacids and hopes for some relief. There is another option, however. Herbal medicine has been part of human life for thousands of years, and it still offers us many health benefits, especially for those looking for an effective treatment for indigestion. In the countryside, yarrow grows wild; in the backyard garden, fennel, dill, and mint grow well. Learning to use them can make a big difference in your life!

Yarrow is a good example of a common plant that has healing properties. Its rough angular stem with many long narrow leaves gives it a feathery appearance. The plant flowers in July and August and produces white or pale lilac flowers which look like tiny daisies. "Yarrow grows in Britain, Scandanavia, Europe, and all over the United States except for the extreme south." (Duff 132) Most people think of it as a weed because it is often found along the edge of fields or along country roads, but it grows well anywhere that grass will grow.

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**APPENDIX E**  
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Attention: Kay Curtis  
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**FEEDBACK PROCESS**

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