Checklist for Writing Plan

Step 1 – Plan the structure of the report
As a group, consider:
- Who is the audience for the report?
- What is the medium for your report (printed document, hypertext, website)?
- What sections should it have?
- Roughly, what should go in each section?
- What is the function behind each section?
- What diagrams and/or illustrations would help convey your meaning?

As a group, plan:
- An outline of the whole report.
- The writing style of the report (business, technical, first/third person, etc).
- A strategy for keeping track of references and sources of information.
- Word limits for the whole report, and each section.
- The formatting of the document (font, size, heading styles, header/footer, etc).
- A schedule for writing, proof-reading, editing, publishing.

Step 2 – Who does what?
As a group, decide on one of the following strategies:

Everybody writes a section

Pros:
- Fairer distribution of work.
- Easy to write one small section each.
- Everyone is able to present their section in a presentation.
- Faster than one person trying to write it all.
- Team members can write the bits they know the most about, that they have researched.

Cons:
- Some bits may be harder than others.
- Harder to make the coherent whole from the sections.
- Potential delays if everyone doesn’t keep to a schedule.
- You don’t know much about anything except your section (unless you make an effort).
- Unlikely to be the best report the group can produce.

One person writes the lot

Pros:
- You can choose the best writer in your group.
- Most of the team get off lightly.
- No problems in fitting the ideas together at the end.
- The rest of the team don’t learn to write together.

Cons:
- One person has an unfair burden.
- Narrower range of ideas used.
- Takes longer for one person to do.
- Poor preparation for a group presentation.
- High reliance on one person – if they do not produce a good report others can’t do much.
- Unlikely to be the best report the group can produce.
Writing co-operatively as a team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros:</th>
<th>Cons:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A more equal sharing of the work.</td>
<td>• Can be a messy, evolving, multistage process of noting, expanding,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Incorporates a variety of ideas, and one person’s ideas can</td>
<td>drafting, reviewing and rewriting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inspire ideas from others.</td>
<td>• Can involve a number of meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Everybody learns about all aspects of the task and report.</td>
<td>• Requires cooperation and commitment from all group members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can produce a coherent, flowing, well structured report.</td>
<td>• Requires careful planning and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can result in a coherent and well rounded presentation.</td>
<td></td>
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3. Sharing responsibility for the different roles (writer, editor, proof reader, publisher)

Create a plan for the different roles each person will play in the production of the report.

Roles that can be incorporated into a writing plan:

Writer - to create the written material via a series of drafts, keeping in mind the information or argument to be conveyed to the reader.
Reviewer - to read the writer's drafts and provide positive criticism about the quality of the writing in conveying information or argument to the reader.
Proof reader - to check with great care for spelling errors, section numbering, references, etc.
Editor - to improve style, impose uniformity across a whole document and correct grammatical errors.
Publisher - to make the finished report look attractive and consistent in layout.† Print and bind the final product.

A basic plan could be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Writer</th>
<th>Reviewer</th>
<th>Proof reader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Person A</td>
<td>Person B</td>
<td>Person C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Person B</td>
<td>Person C</td>
<td>Person D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Person C</td>
<td>Person D</td>
<td>Person A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Person D</td>
<td>Person A</td>
<td>Person B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading the final document … Person A, Person B, Person C and Person D.

The plan can be extended to incorporate other roles, like editor and publisher, and include deadlines for the different stages of the writing.