

WRITING BOOK REPORTS

Reading is one of the most common activities in prison. Many people consider themselves readers. When asked how many books they have read, the answers are often vague:

- » I've read a lot,
- » I've read thousands of books, or
- » I've read too many books to count.

Those answers reveal a missed opportunity.

In business, there is a simple rule: if you cannot measure progress, it does not exist. Reading without documentation is invisible. Reading with intention and documentation becomes evidence of preparation.

Book reports and learning records exist to turn reading into a measurable, verifiable asset.

WHY BOOK REPORTS MATTER

Reading is an investment in personal development. When reading is intentional and documented, it shows:

- » Discipline and consistency
- » Commitment to learning
- » Ability to reflect and apply information
- » Alignment between learning and future goals

Without documentation, others may or may not take your word for what you're saying. With documentation, you can show rather than tell.

LEARNING AS THE CEO OF YOUR LIFE

As the CEO of your life, you are responsible for how you invest your time and attention.

- » A CEO does not say, "I've learned a lot."

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- » A CEO says, “Here is what I learned, why it mattered, and how it improved performance.”

Book reports allow you to demonstrate mastery over subjects that matter to your future. They turn reading from a passive activity into a strategic decision.

READING WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN MIND

At some point, you may sit across from a stakeholder. It could be:

- » A case manager
- » A probation officer
- » A judge
- » A prospective employer
- » A mentor or family member

Your responsibility in that moment is to overcome skepticism.

Imagine the difference between these two statements:

1. “I read a lot in prison.”
2. “I set a goal to read two books per month. I have now completed 30 months and read 60 books. Each book aligns with my release goals. I wrote a report for every book. You can review them on my profile.”

The second statement shows planning, execution, consistency, and follow-through. It demonstrates preparation rather than promising it.

That difference can influence opportunities, relationships, and outcomes.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A BOOK REPORT

Book reports in the Profiles course are intentionally simple. Complexity is not required. Consistency is.

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Each book report should include:

- » Book title
- » Author
- » Date completed

Then respond to three questions:

- » Why did I choose to read this book?
- » What did I learn from reading this book?
- » How will the lessons from this book contribute to my success upon release?

This structure keeps reports focused, relevant, and easy to maintain over time.

MEASURING PROGRESS THROUGH READING

Book reports allow you to measure learning just as a CEO measures performance.

You can track:

- » Number of books read
- » Frequency of reading
- » Subjects studied
- » Alignment between reading and goals

When all book reports are organized in your profile, they form a visible record of effort and growth.

HOW BOOK REPORTS STRENGTHEN YOUR PROFILE

Book reports complement every other part of your profile:

- » Your biography explains who you are and where you're going
- » Your journals document daily effort and reflection
- » Your book reports prove intentional learning
- » Your release plan connects learning to action

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Together, they create a credible record of preparation that others can evaluate.

Book reports can also strengthen relationships with family members and mentors, who can see tangible evidence of how seriously you are preparing for the future.

REFLECTION EXERCISES

Use the prompts below to begin writing book reports that can be added directly to your profile.

REFLECTION EXERCISE 1: PURPOSEFUL READING

Think about a book you have recently read or are currently reading.

- » Why did you choose this book?
- » What goal or challenge does it relate to?
- » How does it fit into your overall plan?

Use your response to begin the first section of a book report.

REFLECTION EXERCISE 2: LEARNING AND APPLICATION

Move beyond summary.

- » What are the most important lessons you learned?
- » Which ideas stood out or challenged your thinking?
- » How can you apply at least one lesson to your life now?

Use your response to complete the learning section of a book report.

REFLECTION EXERCISE 3: MEASURING COMMITMENT

Consider consistency.

- » How many books have you read in the past month?
- » What reading goal will you set moving forward?
- » How will you document each book you complete?

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Use your response to create a learning record that tracks reading as a measurable habit.

Reading is common. Documented learning is rare. Book reports turn reading into proof of preparation, discipline, and intent.

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