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THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 1 PAGES  
COPY NO. 3 OF 3 SERIES A  
18 April 1945

Subject: Notes on DSM Project

To: District Engineer, Manhattan District, Oak Ridge, Tenn.  
Att: Major Harry S. Traynor

1. Attached hereto is a copy of a document entitled "Some Notes for Guidance to Writers of Basic Data Books on DSM Project", dated 30 March 1945.
2. These notes were prepared by Mr. Hadden after discussion with General Groves; they have been carefully reviewed by General Groves and such revisions and changes as he desired have been incorporated in the document in its present form.
3. General Groves wishes the writers of the history to be guided by these notes.

Incl-2 copies of document  
as above

*J. O'Leary*  
J. O'Leary  
Administrative Assistant

Dist: 1 & 2 - addressee  
3 - file

Dist of Inclosure:  
Copies 1,2,6,& 7 - Mr Hadden  
3 & 4 - Maj Traynor  
5 - file copy

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CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED  
MAR 16 1961  
For The Atomic Energy Commission  
*Robert L. Jackson*  
Chief, Declassification Branch

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30 March 1945

Some Notes for Guidance to Writers of Basic Data Books  
on AEC Projects

1. Emphasis should be placed on events and not on background of those events. The purpose is to present a reasonably smooth and interesting running account of events, actions, etc., with explanations of what they were, why they occurred, why something else was not done, etc., etc. The fact that the writing is intended as a record should be completely submerged; the writing should in fact not be a record in itself; the record itself is found in the original documents, etc., to which the book refers. In describing a specific act, it is usually inadvisable to begin with a description of the meeting (or the letter, etc.) from which the decision to perform that act evolved; it is generally preferable to describe the act first and then explain (sometimes by mere references) the authority under which it was performed.

2. Extreme care should be exercised not to emphasize unduly any point on which the War Department may be, or may be thought to be, somewhat sensitive of criticism or in a somewhat weak position. There is a natural tendency to make sure—or doubly sure—that every useful explanation or supporting statement on such a point is included, with the frequent result that these points hit the reader in the face (sometimes several times while reading different parts of the writing). This has the fatal effect of leading the reader unerringly to the weak points. Such points should be treated in the same way as the strong points with no more emphasis and no less—but adequately.

3. Over-emphasis on strong points may be just as undesirable. The reader does not need to be particularly subtle to recognize that weak points may be found among those which are not emphasized.

4. Mechanical adherence to a more or less standard outline form is usually helpful in avoiding the pit-falls described in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

5. If criticisms or charges have already been made against the War Department, especially by persons or agencies of importance, it may be useful to include in the book a more or less detailed discussion of each and every one of them, quoting exactly the charge and following it immediately with the discussion of that charge. The discussions should include explanations and answers, as factual as possible; they may properly indicate some righteous indignation, in cases of misstatement, deliberate confusion, suppression of facts, etc., provided such indignation is not unduly exaggerated. Such charges and their discussions are preferably placed all together in a separate appendix of the book, in order that they may be readily removed if desired, and in order to avoid the objectionable repetition which they would almost certainly produce if they were made a part of the main book—it is usually necessary to repeat in the discussion of a charge some of the material which must necessarily be included elsewhere in the book.

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For The Atomic Energy Commission  
*Robert L. Jackson*  
for the  
Director, Development Branch

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6. Unnecessary repetitions of statements, explanations, etc., should be avoided insofar as possible. Cross-references to other parts of the book should be substituted if necessary. Adherence to a more or less standard outline is helpful here also.

This does not mean that brief repetitions of material from other books are not permissible. Each book should be reasonably complete in itself, but if in any instance repetition would be too voluminous, a cross-reference to the other book or books should be substituted.

7. Extreme accuracy in every detail is fundamental. Every figure and every statement must be checked at its most reliable source. If, as may be often necessary to save time, a draft is written without the accurate data available, for later checking, all doubtful figures, words, phrases or sentences should be carefully designated by a question mark (?) to remain until it can be superseded by a check mark. (Stenographers should be instructed to type such question marks, or insert them in pencil, whenever they are copying drafts, to avoid loss of such notations.) heavy

8. There should never be any hesitancy in including in the writing:

- a. Pertinent quotations
- b. References to supporting data.

Both of these tend to increase immeasurably the impression of authenticity and accuracy and there should never be any fear of overdoing them.

9. If both the advantages and the disadvantages of some action or course of action for which ~~the~~ we are wholly or partially responsible are on record and the advantages are described in the book, under no circumstances should mention of the disadvantages be omitted. On the contrary, particular care should be exercised to describe every one of the disadvantages, followed by a clear explanation of why the action was taken in spite of these disadvantages. Nothing could so readily destroy the value of a whole book to any reader as his discovery that pertinent and available arguments had been "suppressed".

but it must be simple

10. Whenever a diagram or a graph or a simple drawing will tell a story or emphasize a point more quickly or clearly than mere words or figures, it should be inserted in the book or in an appendix to the book without hesitation. (This is of course particularly true if the graph (or diagram, etc.) is already available in suitable form for reproduction. Graphs are often particularly useful to supplement, or to serve as substitutes for, tabulations or columns of figures. The average modern reader will look at a diagram when he may completely disregard a tabulation.)

11. During the writing of one part of a book it may frequently happen that the writer will think of some statement, etc., which should be included in another part. If the outline does not already clearly indicate the need for this statement, a note of it should be made immediately and should be inserted in the proper place in the outline at the first opportunity.

12. To help to insure completeness of the book it is well to test each significant statement by applying to it the following questions:

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- a. What? b. How? c. Why? d. When? e. Where? f. By whom?  
 g. By what authority? h. How much?

If every one of these questions which may be applicable is answered in the document (not too far removed from the statement) then the writer may be reasonably sure of completeness.

used by General Groves, may also be seen and studied

or the project

13. The writer should bear in mind at all times that the books <sup>while</sup> intended to be ~~read only by those in the War Department~~ <sup>by</sup> persons ~~with~~ <sup>who are</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>friendly</sup> antagonistic or hostile to ~~the War Department~~ <sup>him</sup>. The readers may be persons who have no special scientific or technical training of any kind. They should preferably be visualized as "ordinary laymen"; if the books are written primarily for these readers, insofar as clarity and ease of comprehension are concerned, they should serve satisfactorily for all anticipated readers. This does not mean however that the writing should be all in words of one syllable. It does no harm, and it may be useful, to compliment the reader by the occasional use of an expression or term which may be beyond his comprehension, especially in describing some rather complicated technical process, etc. This may sometimes be accomplished with excellent results by using a somewhat technical phrase or expression in one place and then referring to the same matter again later with a clearly understandable simplified expression, thus giving the reader the definition unobtrusively.

How does it do any harm to permit the reader occasionally to reach his own conclusions, provided the steps leading up to them render these conclusions inescapable. In this connection, it should also be remembered that the emphasis obtainable by deliberate understatement may sometimes be incalculable.

14. If "aside remarks" occur to the writer, such as statements of unusual human or general interest, or humorous statements, which may be more or less pertinent but not suitable for inclusion in the book, the writer should record them separately, with proper reference to the page of the book to which they may be most applicable. Such statements may be helpful for use in connection with oral discussions or speeches on the subject matter of the books. They can, if very short and reasonably suitable, be included in the book.