

Writing a REPORT

What is the purpose of a report?

Usually a report

- gives information
- evaluates something
- or makes suggestions and recommendations

Who will read it?

In most cases the report will be requested by somebody in authority, like a boss or a principal. Often they will want to read the report to gain information in order to make a decision based on facts.

What style should you use?

Be very clear. Give essential information and recommendations.

Use an impersonal style, avoid the personal pronouns 'I' and 'you'.

A report is NOT a letter. Do not use letter openings and endings.

Be concise and precise: do not repeat yourself; make every word work for you.

Do not lift whole chunks of language from the rubric: reword it.

How should I structure a report?

Heading: clear, factual and precise

Introduction: purpose of the report, who is it intended for?

Body: sections with sub-headings dealing with the separate aspects of the subject

Recommendations and Conclusion: This can be one or two paragraphs, depending on the overall length of the report.

Important Points when Writing Reports:

When writing a report as a school assignment

- read the task very carefully
- highlight all the given information which has to be included
- decide what you have to add to make your report as authentic as possible
- be creative, specific, plausible and coherent when making up details. Think yourself into the situation. Give specific evidence to explain and exemplify your main points. You might for example talk about a survey or interviews that have been conducted.
- Use the bullet points given to structure your report (headings!) and include a brief introduction and conclusion

Declaration of Independence for Writers of Reports

I, _____, solemnly promise that when I venture out into the big wide _____ and am asked to write a _____, I shall write _____ what I have been _____ to write. I understand that when I write a _____, I shall be _____ an important service at somebody's _____, almost certainly a person in a higher _____ or a position of _____.

Furthermore, should I be writing _____ of a person or persons who are depending on me to represent them, I shall do my _____ to present their case in an accurate and _____ report. Then, and only then, shall I reveal that I _____ GIBS and had _____ as my English teacher.

Useful phrases for writing reports

Introduction and stating aims:

The aim of this report is to ...

This report is intended to...

This report intends to / aims at...

This report will consider /examine/ compare....

This report looks at

In order to prepare this report, ...was/were visited/ interviewed/ studied... (Use passives here.)
on behalf of...

at the request of...

Reporting impressions and findings:

It seems / appears that...

Most people / the majority of people seem to /tend to ...

It is interesting/ surprising / strange that...

Interestingly, Surprisingly, Strangely,

A survey/ study conducted by... has shown that...

Quoting:

According to X, Y said / felt/ mentioned that ... + reporting tenses!!!

Giving reasons:

Since /As (our city is well-known,...-

For this reason / these reasons.

Consequently,

Generalizing

In general,...

On the whole,...

Summing up:

In conclusion,...

To sum up,...

In short,...

To summarize,...

Making suggestions or recommendations

In my opinion /view

I would recommend (doing sth)

In view of this, I (would) recommend / suggest (that)

We/ I (would) suggest (that)...

They / We could

It is recommended that...

Our recommendation /suggestion is to...

Practice Activities:

1. Organizing a recommendation report

The first paragraph of this recommendation report is missing. Read the report, then choose the most appropriate first paragraph from the three given.

Proposed Subscription to a British Newspaper

1st paragraph is missing. Choose a, b or c below.

Practice Activities:

1. Organizing a recommendation report

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Proposed Subscription to a British Newspaper

1st paragraph is missing:
Choose a, b or c below

Tabloids

There was general agreement that, despite their low price, none of the tabloid newspapers (also known as the 'popular' press) could be recommended, for the following reasons:

- 1 the inappropriacy of the prose as a model of written English.
- 2 the limited coverage of international news, the arts, business, etc.
- 3 a tendency towards sexism, racism and insularity.

Quality press

It was unanimously agreed that only the *Independent* and the *Guardian* merited close scrutiny, the other quality papers holding too little appeal for a readership of students and young professional people.

The *Independent*

(Monday–Saturday, £93.47 for 13 weeks)

All agreed to commend

- the quality of the writing.
- the proportion of international news.
- the broad spectrum of arts coverage.
- the independence of the political stance.

The air mail price appeared to be good value, but there was some disappointment that the Saturday colour supplement was not included.

The *Guardian*

(Monday–Saturday, £127 for 13 weeks)

It was felt that the *Guardian*, although comparable to the *Independent* in most other respects, had a significant advantage in the strength of its Tuesday supplement, *Guardian Education*. This supplement is written in tabloid form and includes excellent articles written to be of interest to secondary school students; there are also articles addressing matters of interest to teachers. The *Guardian's* other advantage was the inclusion on Saturday of a supplement entitled *Guardian Weekend*, more than eighty pages long and illustrated in colour.

Recommendation

Both the *Guardian* and the *Independent* contain a wealth of reading matter that would be a most valuable resource for teachers and students alike. The question was raised whether they would in fact contain too much: would the students and teachers find time to read them? Should this be seen to be a problem, the cheaper and apparently thinner *Independent* may be preferred. If, however, the students and teachers have a large appetite for quality journalism, and if the price of the *Guardian* is within a school's budget, then a subscription to the *Guardian* is recommended.

- a There are many newspapers in Britain, but not all of them would be useful for foreign students. Some of them contain little other than scandal and football, while others are only read by stockbrokers or the landed gentry. We're going to look at the different papers and see which would be best for your school.
- b This report is the product of a working party of five members of the ELT Department of Wessex University whose brief was to identify which British daily newspaper would be most appropriate as a resource for CAE students at language schools in Alava. After a week of individual research, a meeting was held in order to share findings and reach a conclusion.
- c A working party led by James Bigglesworth (myself) was requested, on 3 February 1993, to undertake a survey of the current daily press in Britain and to report their findings to the English Language Teaching Association of Alava. After a long and fascinating week's work during which we ploughed through an enormous quantity of newsprint, here is what we decided.

Report on Need for Financial Support for Victoria Village School

Use the plan and vocabulary given to write a report for Ms Price of Price Right Electronics.

You are spending a gap year in Lesotho, working as a voluntary English teacher in a village school. On behalf of the school, you have applied to Ms Price, as manageress, for sponsorship. Before she decides to donate, Ms Price wants to know how her money will be used.

Write a report for Ms Price explaining

- what conditions are like in the school
- what the school most urgently needs money for
- how she/ner firm can benefit from becoming a sponsor

Write 220 words (+/- 10%)

Report on Need for Financial Support for Victoria Village School

Introduction

_____ Ms Price, executive director of Price Right Electronics, this report
_____ the conditions in Victoria Village School, Lesotho, _____
donations made to the school might be _____ and _____
sponsors could benefit from supporting Victoria Village School.

Conditions in Victoria Village School

(faulty toilets, overcrowded classrooms, outdated teaching materials)

Proposed use of donations

(repair to sanitary facilities, extension: extra classroom, new textbooks for English)

Benefits for sponsors

(BBC documentary on Victoria County planned > media attention)

Conclusion:

As the main center of elementary education in Victoria County, a developing area in Lesotho, Victoria Village School must _____ adequate schooling for all children. Funds are _____ to provide basic _____ for learning, health and well-being as the state allowance for village schools is _____. Sponsorship will be _____ and acknowledged.

Useful Vocabulary:

currently/ at present / at the moment

in poor /bad condition

in a critical/ dangerous condition

in a poor /bad /critical state of repair

in urgent need of renovation /refurbishment

a severe lack /shortage of (adequate) facilities / teaching materials / equipment/ furniture

sanitary facilities / roof repairs are urgently required

additional space is needed to accommodate the growing numbers of students

to attend school

improvements / repairs / and extension TO (e.g. the school building / the premises)

financial aid / support is (most) urgently needed to / for (e.g. repairs of the roof)

donation would be used to / for

At the request of Ms Price / the town council / the principal, this report ...

In return for sponsorship / the valued support of Price Right Electronics, we can offer / we would be pleased to / we would be happy to ...

advertising space can be made available

media presence / interest / attention / coverage is guaranteed