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Writing a Report

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Workshop objectives

- To understand the **genre** of report writing in terms of purpose, language and structure
- To **compare** the genre of report writing to essay writing
- To analyse the **content of different sections** of a report
- To practise analysing **paragraph structure** within a report
- To understand the **planning process** of individual and group report writing

Discussion

- Reports:
 - What type of reports are you writing?
 - What do you want to know about reports?
 - What is the difference between essays and reports?

| |
|-------------|
| Home |
| Purpose |
| Types |
| Sections |
| Integration |

Types of reports

Reports are written for *different* purposes. They therefore contain *different* information and structures, including headings and subheadings, and these form the outline of the report. The table below shows the sections commonly found in these types of reports.

Common report structures

| Short report | Science report | Business report |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Title page ■ Introduction ■ Discussion ■ Recommendations ■ References | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Title page ■ Introduction ■ Method & materials ■ Results ■ Discussion ■ Conclusion ■ Appendices ■ References | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Title page ■ Executive summary ■ Table of contents ■ Introduction ■ Discussion ■ Conclusion ■ Recommendations ■ Appendices ■ References |
| Engineering report | Research report | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Title page ■ Executive summary (optional) ■ Introduction ■ Objectives ■ Analysis ■ Discussion ■ Recommendations & action plan ■ Conclusion ■ Appendices ■ References | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Title page ■ Executive summary ■ Introduction ■ Method / methodology ■ Results / findings ■ Discussion ■ Conclusions ■ Recommendations ■ Appendices ■ Bibliography | |

Source: RMIT University, Learning Lab,
<https://emedu.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/types>

Which one is a report?

Text A

1. Introduction:

The report will compare the advantages of working and living in a country in your country to the country you'd like to go to. You should also consider the disadvantages of living in your country and the advantages of living in the country you'd like to go to. You should also consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in your country and the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country you'd like to go to.

2. The Climate:

Compare the climate in your country and the climate in the country you'd like to go to. You should also consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in your country and the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country you'd like to go to.

3. The People:

Compare the people in your country and the people in the country you'd like to go to. You should also consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in your country and the advantages and disadvantages of living in the country you'd like to go to.

Text B

Comparing and Contrasting Living in a Country



Comparing and contrasting living in a country is a common task in many courses. It allows you to explore the similarities and differences between two different countries and to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of living in each. This task is often used to assess your ability to compare and contrast different countries and to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of living in each.

When comparing and contrasting living in a country, you should consider the following factors:

- Climate:** Compare the climate in your country with the climate in the country you are comparing it to. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in each climate.
- People:** Compare the people in your country with the people in the country you are comparing it to. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in each country.
- Cost of Living:** Compare the cost of living in your country with the cost of living in the country you are comparing it to. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in each country.
- Quality of Life:** Compare the quality of life in your country with the quality of life in the country you are comparing it to. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of living in each country.

By comparing and contrasting living in a country, you can gain a better understanding of the similarities and differences between two different countries and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of living in each.

Purpose – essay or report?

- To convince the reader that your viewpoint about an idea is valid and supported by relevant research 
- To present information in a logical way about a problem or situation you have investigated. In the workplace, this aids decision making. 

Audience – essay or report?

- Professional readers
- ‘the client/ manager/ colleagues’

REPORT

Does the assignment specify **who** it is for?

- Academic readers
- ‘the lecturer’

ESSAY

Reports and essays – what's similar?

Both require:

- formal style
- introduction, body and conclusion
- analytical thinking
- application of relevant theoretical concepts
- correct referencing
- careful proofreading and neat presentation

Reports and essays – what's the difference?

REPORT

- Document a process of enquiry
- Accessible and explanatory style
- Can be scanned
- Have numbered headings and sub-headings
- Dot points *may* be acceptable
- Have short concise paragraphs
- Use graphics
- May include executive summaries
- May include recommendations
- May include appendices
- Can be produced by group

ESSAY

- Explore an idea or thesis
- Complex and argumentative style
- Must be read carefully
- Do not have headings and sub-headings
- Dot points are not acceptable
- Ideas linked in cohesive paragraphs
- Do not use graphics
- Do not have executive summaries
- Do not include practical recommendations
- Do not include appendices
- Not usually produced by group

Sample of an essay question

- Question 1:

Classical management theory conceptualises communication as a downward, one-way transfer of information from management to staff. What in your view makes for good leadership communication in organisations?

Reports – assignment question

- **Set of instructions** provided by client or employer (lecturer)
- **Instructions** raise **questions/problems**
 - Report should attempt to answer or solve them.
- Each field of study may have a preferred model.
- If instructions are vague or ambiguous.....**Clarify with your lecturer.**

Sample report assignment questions

Go to your subject outline for examples of assignment questions.

If students do not have their own subject outline with them for the workshop, the HELPS advisor can show a some examples from the communication hub. For example:

https://online.uts.edu.au/bbcswebdav/pid-1385790-dt-content-rid-8113376_1/orgs/orgstf158/Organisational%20Management%20in%20Health%20Care%282%29.pdf (page 8-9)

https://online.uts.edu.au/bbcswebdav/pid-1382268-dt-content-rid-8063773_1/orgs/orgstf158/Engineering%20Project%20Preparation.pdf (page 7)

In general the report includes ...

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations/glossary (if necessary)
- Executive summary/abstract (**sometimes before ToC**)
- Introduction
- Body sections
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Reference list
- Appendices (**if necessary**)

Types of reports

Different types of reports contain different types of information:

https://www.dlsweb.mit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_AssessmentTasks/assess_tuts/reports_LL/types.html

Title page

- Report title
- Person for whom the report prepared
- Person(s) who prepared the report – (name & student #)
- Date of report/submission date

Sample reports

Use the HELPS website to find sample annotated reports (and other types of assignments).

UTS > [Current Students](#) > [Support](#) > [HELPS](#) > [About HELPS](#)



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Self-help resources

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Self-he



Here is a selection of resources to help you develop your writing skills.

Essential

Writing Skills

Sample reports

<https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/support/helps/self-help-resources/sample-written-assignments>

Table of Contents

Note: A Table Of Contents may only be required in long reports

- A numbered list of the main sections and subsections of the report

*Executive summary may not be numbered

Table of Contents: Example 1

| | | |
|--------------------------------|----|---|
| I. Executive Summary | | |
| II. PRELIMINARY COSTS | 1 | |
| 1.1 Staff costs | | 1 |
| 1.1.1 <i>Recruitment costs</i> | | 3 |
| 1.1.2 <i>Training costs</i> | | 5 |
| 1.2 Equipment | | 9 |
| III. SECONDARY COSTS | 10 | |
| References | 44 | |
| Table 1 | 22 | |

Table of Contents: Example 2

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| Executive Summary | ii |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Sub-heading | 2 |
| 2.1 Sub-subheading | 2 |
| 2.2 Sub-subheading | 4 |
| 3. Sub-heading | 6 |
| 3.1 Sub-subheading | 6 |
| 4. Conclusion | 8 |
| 5. References | 9 |

Executive Summary/Abstract

Note: This is ONLY required in *long* reports

The executive summary summarises:

- The introduction (context and purpose of report)
- Methods
- Major findings
- Conclusions
- Main recommendations

Executive Summary

- How long should the executive summary be?
 - **One page for every 5,000 words**
- When should you write it?
 - **After you finish writing your report**

Introduction

- The aim of this paper is to give ...
- This paper reports on ...
- The primary focus of this paper is ...
- This report provides ...
- This study aims to ...

Body

- Divided into sections and sub-sections.
- Depending on the type of report will include:
 - What you found out from your investigation
 - What those findings mean
 - How your findings relate to the question you were investigating
 - How the research was carried out (methodology)

Headings – Numerals and letters

- I PRELIMINARY COSTS
 - A. Staff Costs
 - 1. Recruitment costs
 - a) Management recruitment
 - b) Clerical recruitment
 - 2. Training costs
 - 3. Salaries
 - B. Equipment
 - 1. Costing
 - 2. Budgeting
- II SECONDARY COSTS
 - A.

Headings – Numbers

- 1.0 PRELIMINARY COSTS
 - 1.1 Staff costs
 - 1.1.1 Recruitment costs
 - 1.1.1.1 Management recruitment
 - 1.1.1.2 Clerical recruitment
 - 1.1.2 Training costs
 - 1.1.3 Salaries
 - 1.2 Equipment
 - 1.2.1 Costing
 - 1.2.2 Budgeting
- 2.0 SECONDARY COSTS
 - 2.1 and so on

Sub-headings as noun phrases

➔ Use noun phrases for your sub-headings

e.g. Competitive advantages of Company X

NOT: What are the competitive advantages of company X?

NOT: Company X has many advantages

Parallel form in sub-headings

Which is the odd one out?

- Decrease in costs
- Increase in passenger numbers
- Increasing destinations

How can these sub-headings be made parallel?

Recommendations

- provide suggestions for future action
- are realistic in regard to the possibility of implementation
- are logically derived from the body of the report
- must be relevant and connected to your findings
- are written in parallel form

Recommendations (Example 1)

Recommendation 7.3 Within the context of country programming, the Australian aid program **should give priority to** education, health, infrastructure and rural development in recognition of the critical importance of these sectors of poverty reduction through sustainable development.

Recommendation 7.4 Ongoing sectoral evaluations of AusAID's activities **should be undertaken** and the results used to help determine sectoral policies and the activities within the priority sectors which have the highest rates of return in terms of development impact.

Recommendation 7.5 AusAID **should develop** a new health policy giving clear priority to primary health care – particularly preventable infectious diseases and infant and maternal mortality – and to health sector management and reform. Discussions **should also be held** with the National Health and Medical Research Council and other relevant bodies with a view to giving a higher priority to health research relevant to developing countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

(from Committee of Review, 1997, *One Clear Objection: Poverty Reduction through sustainable development*, AusAID, Canberra.)

Recommendations (Example 2)

Recommendation 9

- **That** universities co-operate in the establishment of twinning projects and mixed mode education in specific discipline.

These initiatives require a leader in each sector. Project-specific consortia could form around particular proposals. It would be unlikely that one university would lead more than one initiate. These consortia could be influential in determining the destination for AusAID-funded students.

Recommendation 10

- **That** the Open Learning Agency investigate the potential for the export of education and training via satellites or other new technologies such as video conferencing and computer aided instruction packages to Vietnam.

Recommendation 11

- **That** the AVCC establish a code of ethics for Australian universities operation overseas, in addition to the existing code relating to overseas students.

(from Fahey, S., 1996, Australian University Activity in Vietnam, AGPS, Canberra.)

Recommendations (Example 3)

Recommendation No. 1

The ANAO recommends that AusAID enhance the management of any further reforms to the ADS scheme by:

- preparing adequate costings of proposed changes to support the business case for change and provide a basis for monitoring and assessing the achievement of financial benefits; and
- developing and monitoring implementation plans and timetables for key reform components to enable effective project management and provide greater assurance that outcomes are achieved in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Recommendation No. 2

The ANAO recommends that AusAID improve strategic management of ADS assistance by:

- refining the guiding principles of scholarship assistance to reflect its contribution to country aid and Australia's goal for education and training assistance;
- developing operational strategies in support of achieving improved key scheme outputs and outcomes and reducing scheme costs; and
- conducting a structured risk management analysis for ADS to better identify, assess and manage scheme risks.

Appendices

- Material that supports the text but is too detailed or too large to include in the report, e.g. long complex table of figures.
- Lecturers may specify what should be included in Appendix – if not sure...ask!
- Don't use appendix to show a lot of information that has been collected. It should be relevant and useful.
- Appendices should be numbered and referred to in the text.

Refer to appendix in text - example

This study involved a survey of the Chamber of Manufacturers. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey is included in Appendix 1.

Tables (example)

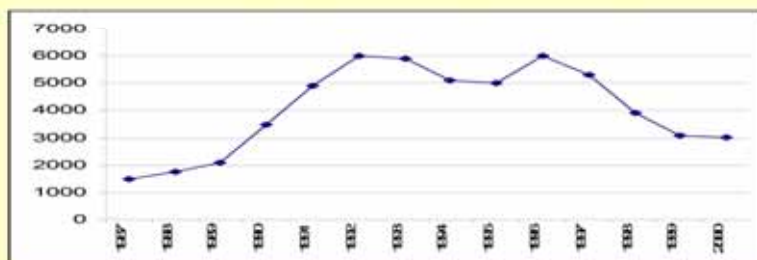
Table 2: Accommodation by Purpose: Trips with main destination in NSW 1982-1983

| Accommodation Type | Pleasure/Holiday | Visiting Friends & Relatives | All Purposes |
|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| | % | % | % |
| Hotel/motel/guest house | 21.6 | 4.7 | 23.1 |
| Rented house, flat | 7.1 | 1.8 | 4.3 |
| Own holiday house | 9.3 | 3.5 | 6.3 |
| Friends'/relations house | 29.6 | 84.2 | 47.1 |
| Caravan/camping ground | 19.9 | 2.7 | 10.4 |
| Other | 11.6 | 2.6 | 7.8 |
| Not stated | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: NSW Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Figures (example)

Fig. 1 AusAID sponsored students 1987-2000



Source: AusAid

How to plan for reports?

- Mind map is useful: plan major sections, then decide on sub-sections.
- Reader needs to see at a glance how your material is organised.
- Headings and sub-headings do the same job as topic sentences in paragraphs in essays.
- Allocate a certain number of words to each section.

Writing the Group Report

Plan

In group, discuss overall structure

Write outline

-In group, write list of contents
-In group, agree on word/page limit for each section

Allocate tasks

for individual members for each section
-Writers
-Reviewers

Overall

Who will be the:
-Editor
-Proofreader
-Publisher?

For more examples and exercises go to:

[https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/
content/reports-0](https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/reports-0)

Extra example.....with hand out

**Report question, introduction &
conclusion**

Example report question

Workplace diversity is now recognised as an important feature in organisations, especially in multicultural nations like Australia. What communication problems might arise in a culturally diverse workplace, and how can managers best deal with them?

Look at the example introduction and conclusion on the following slides.

Over the past twenty five years, since Australia embraced multiculturalism as a policy, issues of intercultural communication have become increasingly prominent in the workplace. However, until relatively recently, little had been written on these issues, and even now, many organisational managers have no training or knowledge of how to deal with communication problems, even though most workplaces are staffed by people of diverse cultures. Particular problem areas include the difficulties that some non-English speakers have in understanding safety instructions (figures produced by the ABS in 1997 show that migrant workers have a higher incidence of accidents at the workplace); an ignorance of the different forms of non-verbal communication used by other cultures (for example it is considered impolite in some societies for an employee to look directly at his or her employer), which can lead to misunderstandings and unpleasantness; and the lack of knowledge about differing expectations. Based on interviews with managers and staff in six organisations (public and commercial), this report examines these three problem areas, and shows that many of the difficulties faced by both natives and migrants in the workforce are caused by a lack of awareness of, and training in, intercultural communication.

This provides background information about the subject.

This sentence explains the problem. Note that words from the report question are being reused to signal appropriate content.

The scope points start here and identify the subjects to be examined.

The thesis statement explicitly states the specific focus of the report – to examine – and tells how this is achieved. I.e. through interviews.

It is clear, therefore, that not only do employees have to be trained for working in the Australian multicultural workplace, but managers also need to be trained. Managers must ensure that effective in-house training programs are provided for migrant workers, so that they become more familiar with the English language, Australian communication norms and the Australian work culture. In addition, Australian native English speakers need to be made aware of the differing cultural values of their workmates; particularly the different forms of non-verbal communication used by other cultures. Furthermore, all employees must be provided with clear and detailed guidelines about company expectations. The interviews with managers and staff reveal that a majority of managers must also have training in cross cultural communication and in managing a culturally diverse workplace. Above all, in order to minimise communication problems and to maintain an atmosphere of tolerance, understanding and cooperation in the multicultural workplace, managers need to have an effective knowledge about their employees, to understand how their social conditioning affects their beliefs about work and to have the communication skills to develop confidence and self-esteem among diverse work groups. The culturally diverse Australian workplace may never be completely free of communication problems, however, further studies to identify potential problems and solutions, as well as better training in cross cultural communication for managers and employees, should result in a much more understanding and cooperative environment.

This sentence provides a link to the previous paragraph and refers to the main subject discussed in the body. It uses keywords such as 'managers' and 'multicultural workplace'.

These sentences refer back to the problem areas stated in the introduction (scope points) and identify solutions.

This refers back to the thesis statement in the introduction and identifies a key finding of the study.

This is a statement about what the writer considers to be the most important recommendation.

The final sentence suggests future trends and makes a final recommendation for further study.

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