

# Reports

You studied and practised writing reports in Units 8 and 11.

## Exercise 1

Read the following writing task and answer the questions below:

Your teacher has asked you to write a report on things for young people to do in their free time in the area where you live. In your report, you should mention what free-time facilities there are and recommend improvements.

Write your **report**.

- 1 Do you think you should use a formal or informal style for this report?
- 2 Read Christine's report below.
  - Is the style formal or informal?
  - Does it answer the question completely?

### Report on free-time facilities in my area

#### Introduction

The aim of this report is to outline what young people do in my area in their free time, what facilities exist for them and how these could be made better.

#### Free-time activities

My town, Beauvoir, is quite small, so it does not have a cinema or theatre and there is only one club for young people. As a result, young people have to take the train or bus to Nantes, which is about 30 kilometres away if they want these things. On the other hand, it is situated by the sea, so many young people spend their free time on the beach or doing water sports.

#### Other facilities

Beauvoir has a sports centre with tennis courts, a football pitch and a swimming pool. There are also a number of cafés where young people normally go to meet each other and spend their free time.

#### Recommendations

I recommend that the town council should set up a youth club where young people could meet, do other activities and also see films. This would encourage young people to stay in the town at weekends and improve their social life.

Notice the layout.  
The report:

- has a title
- is divided into sections
- each section has a heading.

Normally, we state the aim or purpose of the report at the beginning.

Avoid repeating exactly the words of the question, e.g. the question says *recommend improvements*. The report says *how these could be made better*.

Give reasons for your recommendations.

## Ways of making recommendations and suggestions

*I recommend that: I recommend that the town council should set up a youth club ...*

*I (would) recommend + verb + -ing: I would recommend setting up a youth club ...*

*I suggest + verb + -ing: I suggest buying more equipment for the sports centre.*

*I suggest that: I suggest that the council should provide cheap transport for young people and students.*

*It would be a good idea (for somebody) + infinitive: It would be a good idea for the council to provide cheap transport for young people and students.*

## Ways of starting a report

*The aim of this report is + infinitive: The aim of this report is to outline ...*

*The purpose of this report is + infinitive: The purpose of this report is to describe ...*



## Writing Part 2 A report

- ① Work in pairs. When you write, you should decide whether to write in a formal or an informal style. Would you use a formal (F) or an informal (I) style for each of these readers? Write F or I by each.

- 1 a school director .....F.....
- 2 classmates .....
- 3 friends .....
- 4 people much older than you .....
- 5 relatives .....
- 6 someone working in an office .....

- ② Would you use a formal (F) or an informal (I) style for each of these tasks? Write F or I by each.

- 1 a letter or email to a friend: .....I.....
- 2 an article in your college magazine: .....
- 3 a letter or email to a Tourist Information office: .....
- 4 a report for the director of your college: .....
- 5 an essay for your teacher or college tutor: .....
- 6 a review of a film in an international magazine: .....
- 7 a story for a class competition: .....

- ③ In each pair below, decide which is generally a characteristic of formal (F) or informal (I) language. Write F or I by each.

- 1 a Contractions (*it won't ... , she's been ...*): .....I.....  
b No contractions (*it will not ... , she has been ...*): .....F.....
- 2 a Long words (*apologise, frequently, unfortunately*): .....  
b Short words (*sorry, often, sadly*): .....
- 3 a Common words (*difficult, play*): .....  
b Less common words (*complicated, perform*): .....
- 4 a Phrasal verbs (*fill in, ask for*): .....  
b Other types of verb (*complete, order*): .....
- 5 a Complete sentences (*I was delighted to receive your letter*): .....  
b Incomplete sentences (*Great to hear from you again*): .....
- 6 a Abbreviations (*Sept*): .....  
b No abbreviations (*September*): .....

- ④ Read the writing task below and underline the two things you must deal with in your report.

Your town wants to spend a large amount of money encouraging young people to participate in more sports activities during their holidays. You have been asked to write a report for the town council saying what types of sporting activities the town should encourage and how doing these activities would benefit young people.

Write your report.

- ⑤ Work in pairs. Answer the following questions about the writing task above.

- 1 Who is going to read the report?
- 2 Should you use a formal or informal style? Why?
- 3 What types of sporting activities do you think your town should encourage?
- 4 How would they benefit young people (e.g. people might make new friends)?

- ⑥ Decide which ideas you would like to include in your report.

- ⑦ Read the following report and circle the more formal option in *italics* in each case.





## Report on sports activities for young people

### Introduction

The aim of this report is to (1) suggest / *come up with* (2) *a number of / some* sports activities which (3) *kids / young people* in this town could do during their holidays and to (4) *outline / sum up* (5) *the benefits of / what they'll get out of* these (6) *things / activities*.

### Which sports?

The town (7) *is situated / is* between the coast and the mountains, and young people would (8) *have a good time doing / enjoy* sports which take place in these areas. (9) *Activities on the coast could include / We could do several things on the coast such as* windsurfing, swimming and diving which a local water-sports school could (10) *set up / organise*. (11) *Similarly / Also*, (12) *we could pay a local mountaineering club / a local mountaineering club could be employed* to run sports such as hiking and climbing.

### Benefits to youngsters

Doing these activities would (13) *be good for / benefit* local young people by making them more independent, (14) *encouraging / building up* team spirit and giving them a sense of adventure. At the same time (15) *they'd get / they would become* fitter.

### Conclusion

(16) *I recommend / I'm in favour of* organising these activities with the water-sports school and the mountaineering club. Young people would find that the sports are an interesting, (17) *enjoyable / fun* and healthy way to spend the holidays. The activities would also help them to (18) *grow / develop* physically and mentally.

### 8 Read the report again and answer the following questions.

- 1 Does the report have a title?
- 2 How many sections does the report have? How do you know the subject of each section?
- 3 What is the purpose of the first section?
- 4 How many suggestions for sporting activities does the writer make in the second section?
- 5 How many benefits are mentioned in the third section?
- 6 What is the purpose of the conclusion?
- 7 Is the style of the report formal or informal?



## riting Part 2 A report

- ① **Work in pairs. Read the following writing task, underlining the things you must deal with in your answer. Which do you think the money should be spent on?**

The college where you study has been given a large amount of money to spend either on improving the classrooms or on students' social activities. The director of your college has asked you to write a report describing the benefits of both ideas and saying which one you think should be chosen and why.

Write your report.

- ② **Answer the questions below.**

- 1 Who will read your report?
- 2 Should you write in an informal or formal style?
- 3 What things must you include in your report?

- ③ **Read the report below. Write one verb from the box in the correct form in each space.**

benefit	contain	discuss	find	improve
make	participate	recommend	reduce	spend

## Our College Money

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to (1) ..... discuss ..... whether the money which has been given to the college should be (2) ..... on improving the classrooms or on students' social activities and to (3) ..... a recommendation.

### The classrooms

- ☛ The college classrooms are well-equipped with the latest technologies. Each classroom already (4) ..... computers with internet connections and an interactive whiteboard. However, the furniture needs replacing because students who attend class all day (5) ..... it uncomfortable and this affects their concentration. Furthermore, the classrooms would (6) ..... from an air-conditioning system, and this would also (7) ..... the quality of students' work.

### Social activities

The college already has a social programme with a wide range of activities for students to (8) ..... in. If money was spent on this, it would (9) ..... the cost of the activities for the students and they would be able to take part in more of them.

### Recommendation

I (10) ..... spending the money on new furniture and an air-conditioning system as this would have a beneficial effect on students' work in class.

- ④ **Work in pairs.**

- 1 What recommendation does the writer make to the college director?
- 2 How can the college director find things quickly in the report if he/she doesn't have much time?
- 3 Has the report dealt with everything in the writing task question?
- 4 What is the purpose of each section?
- 5 Which tenses are used? Why?
- 6 Does the report use contractions (*it's*, *we'll*)? Why (not)?

- ⑤ **Complete these ways of making recommendations and suggestions by putting the verb in brackets into the correct form.**

- 1 I recommend ..... installing ..... (install) a new air-conditioning system.
- 2 I suggest ..... (spend) money on improving the social programme.
- 3 I suggest that the college should ..... (buy) new furniture for the classrooms.
- 4 It would be a good idea ..... (equip) all the classrooms with computers.

- Read the sample report and write one word/phrase from the box in each gap.

accounted for   the aim   as a consequence   due to  
means   meant   resulted   so as   the effect   the result

## English-language TV programmes in my country

### Introduction

The <sup>1</sup>..... of this report is to comment on the popularity of imported English-language television programmes in my country, to explain how they are affecting local culture and to recommend changes that could be made in the way these programmes are shown.

### Popularity of imported programmes

Approximately fifty percent of the programmes shown on TV in this country have been made in an English-speaking country and were originally in English. The popularity of these programmes can be <sup>2</sup>..... by their larger budgets, which <sup>3</sup>..... they are generally more spectacular than locally made programmes and may include internationally famous stars in their casts. On most channels, viewers can choose which language they wish to watch the programme in, with <sup>4</sup>..... that people with a good command of English tend to watch programmes in their original versions.

### Effects on local culture

The popularity of English-language programmes has <sup>5</sup>..... that it is hard for local programme-makers to compete, given their limited budgets. <sup>6</sup>....., local culture has been heavily influenced by American values of consumerism. Moreover, exposure to mistranslations of English-language films has <sup>7</sup>..... in words in our languages being used with new or wrong meanings. However, a positive effect has been that people have become more open and ready to change <sup>8</sup>..... the fact that they see other ways of living and thinking.

### Recommended changes

I would recommend that the government should subsidise national television companies <sup>9</sup>..... to encourage them to make more quality programmes. This would have <sup>10</sup>..... of reducing our reliance on imported programmes while at the same time promoting local values and culture.

- Read the report again and answer these questions.

- How is the layout of a report different from other types of writing?
- Has the writer included all the points in the writing task? Where are they dealt with in the report?
- Is the style appropriate for the target readers?

- Read the following writing task and then

- underline the points you must deal with
- identify who will read the report
- decide what style you will need to use
- decide what title to give your report and what sections and section headings you will need.

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## Writing | Part 2

### A report

1 Read the exam task below and underline the key points. Then answer these questions.

- 1 Why does the organisation want to improve your work environment?
- 2 Who will read the report?

The international organisation where you work has a sum of money available for making improvements to the work environment in your office to make it more productive. You have been asked to write a report for your manager in which you

- outline the problems with your work environment
- summarise the improvements you and your colleagues suggested
- recommend two changes.

Write your report. Write between 220 and 260 words.



Read the report again and choose the more formal alternatives from the options 1-16 in italics

## Report on workplace improvements

### Introduction

The aim of this report is to <sup>1</sup>*sum up / outline* <sup>2</sup>*the deficiencies in / what's wrong with* our present office environment and the suggestions which have been made for improvements, and to <sup>3</sup>*make recommendations / give ideas* for two changes.

### The office environment

At present, the office suffers from <sup>4</sup>*a number of / lots of* problems. Firstly, the air-conditioning system is

<sup>5</sup>*antiquated / worn out* and therefore noisy. This causes headaches and occasionally makes it difficult to <sup>6</sup>*talk on the phone / hold telephone conversations*. Also, the open office plan makes it difficult for people to <sup>7</sup>*get on with / concentrate on* their work as they are frequently <sup>8</sup>*put off / distracted* by conversations in other parts of the office. Finally, many of the office chairs are uncomfortable and employees who spend <sup>9</sup>*lots of time / long hours* in front of their computers often complain of backache.

### Staff suggestions

Staff were <sup>10</sup>*consulted / asked* and they made the following suggestions: first, the air-conditioning should be replaced by a more modern, quieter system which provides cool air in the summer and heating in the winter. It was felt that this would <sup>11</sup>*reduce / cut down on* tiredness and improve morale, which would enable staff to work more productively. To deal with distractions from conversations there were two suggestions: either dividing the office with screens round each work station, or having separate meeting rooms for <sup>12</sup>*necessary work discussions / the chats people need at work*. Staff also requested more ergonomic office chairs.

### Recommendation

<sup>13</sup>*As a first measure, I would recommend / The first thing I'd recommend* is replacing the air conditioning and the office chairs. These two changes will <sup>14</sup>*have a direct effect on productivity / increase the amount of work people do by* reducing <sup>15</sup>*absence due to sick leave / time off because people are ill* and <sup>16</sup>*giving staff the chance / enabling staff* to work more efficiently and more comfortably.



## Writing | Part 2

### A report

- 1 Read the writing task and consider the facilities in a school or college that you know. How would you rate them, from your point of view as a student? Think about the following areas listed below and give each one a star rating (★★★ = excellent, ★★ = adequate, ★ = inadequate).

- classrooms
- study areas
- technological equipment
- food and drink
- leisure or sports facilities
- car parking

A committee is looking into ways of improving facilities in your place of study. The committee chairperson has asked you to write a report on the current situation and make suggestions for improvements. Address the interests of these three groups of people:

- students
- staff members: teachers and administrative staff
- visitors: prospective future students and others.

Write your **report** in 220–260 words.



- 2 Work in pairs and compare your ratings, giving reasons. Where you agree about facilities that are not adequate, discuss ways in which they could be improved.

- 3 Read this sample report without paying attention to the missing headings. Does the writer make any points that are similar to ones you and your partner have made?

### Report on improving college facilities

(1) .....

The purpose of this report is to suggest ways in which college facilities could be improved for students, staff and visitors. The report is based on comments from these three groups and on my own observations.

(2) .....

Both students and staff commented on the need for increased provision of computers. Students would welcome more study areas equipped with computers, while staff felt strongly that they would also be able to work more efficiently if they had their own computer programmes.

(3) .....

Staff expressed the view that the cost of food in the canteen was unnecessarily high and recommended a reduction. Students did not mention price, but would appreciate a wider choice of food.

(4) .....

Dissatisfaction with car parking facilities was expressed by staff and visitors. Staff would like reserved spaces away from other parking areas, while visitors would be grateful for extra spaces to be made available to them, especially on certain weekday mornings. Visitors also said they would like key places, like the main reception, to be more clearly signposted from parking areas.

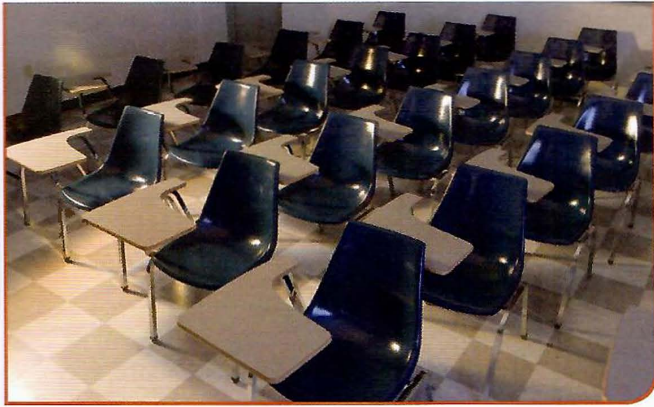
(5) .....

Students suggested that the gym and other sports facilities should be enlarged to take account of the increase in student numbers in recent years.

(6) .....

I would recommend implementing all the suggestions listed above with the exception of providing more car parking spaces. It is clear from past experience that demand for parking is never satisfied. I would suggest urging drivers to make alternative travel arrangements.



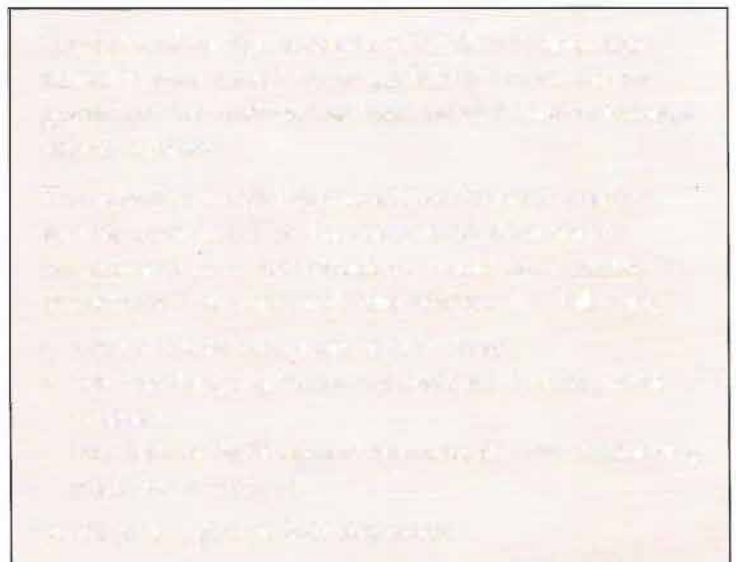


6 Look at these phrases and think of **more formal** equivalents, which you might want to use in **your** report.

- 1 families students stay with
- 2 learning with the help of a computer
- 3 mix with people
- 4 more chance to speak
- 5 pick up (a language)
- 6 teachers who know what they're doing
- 7 the number of students in a class
- 8 things to do in your free time
- 9 ways of teaching
- 10 working on your own

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7 Read the writing task below.



4 Choose the correct alternative in each of these statements about headings in a report.

- a Headings *need* / *don't need* to be brief.
- b They *are* / *are not* usually in the form of a full sentence.
- c They should cover *all the ideas* / *the main topic* in the paragraph that follows.

Now think of suitable headings for the sample report.

5 Discuss these questions.

- 1 Apart from the title, how can you tell that the sample text is a report?
- 2 What structures are used with the verbs *recommend* and *suggest*?
- 3 What reporting verbs are used instead of *said*?
- 4 What verbs and phrases are used to mean *would like*?



## Reports

When you write a report your reader may be, for example, your manager at work or a teacher, in which case you will need a more formal style; or you may be writing for your colleagues or members of your club, in which case the style will be a little less formal – you can address them more personally, perhaps using contractions. In both cases the format should be the same. You will have to give some factual information and you are often asked to make suggestions or recommendations. You must organise your report carefully and one way of doing this is to divide it into sections with headings.

You studied how to write reports in Units 2, 4 and 10.

### Exercise 1

- 1 Read the task below. Underline the parts that tell you what points you must cover in your report and who will read it.
- 2 How formal should this report be?
- 3 When you write about what you like and dislike, do you think you should refer mainly to educational matters, to personal experiences, or to both?

You have been studying in an English-speaking country for some time as part of an educational exchange. The director of the exchange programme is interested in improving the experience for future students. He has asked you to write a report outlining why you have been doing the exchange, describing what you like and dislike about it and making recommendations for how it could be improved.

Write your **report**.

### Exercise 2

- 1 Read the sample report. What things did the writer like and dislike about the programme?
- 2 Find examples of formal style in the sample report.

## Pegasus educational exchange programme

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to outline my reasons for doing the exchange, the positive and negative aspects of the experience and to make recommendations for improvements.

### Reasons for doing the exchange

I have been in New Zealand as part of the Pegasus programme for the last nine months. I participated in the exchange in order to do an MA in Environmental Science at the University of Auckland. At the same time I had the opportunity to improve my English.

### Positive and negative aspects

For me, the benefits of doing this exchange far outweigh the disadvantages. The main professional advantage is the opportunity to exchange ideas with teachers and students from another part of the world (I come from Portugal) and with an entirely different outlook on environmental problems. This has allowed me to see such problems from a variety of angles. As a result, I believe that I will return to my country with innovative solutions to local problems. In addition, I have acquired improved language skills and increased cultural awareness.

The negative aspect from my point of view is that the programme does not receive enough financial support and, as a result, it has been very expensive for me. This is a problem which is likely to discourage prospective exchange students from participating in the programme.

### Recommendations

I strongly recommend that the programme organisers should make interest-free loans available to people wishing to participate in an exchange. This would allow considerable numbers of talented students to benefit from something which they would otherwise be unable to do.

Give your report a title. Organise it in sections with section headings.

Outline the purpose of the report.

Avoid just repeating the words used in the task.

Use vocabulary and collocations appropriate to formal writing.

Explain the reasons for recommendations you make and the consequences of problems you mention.



## Making suggestions and recommendations

formal	less formal
<i>I would suggest + verb + -ing</i> <i>I would suggest including this information on our website.</i>	<i>Why not + infinitive without to</i> <i>Why not phone one of your friends?</i>
<i>I suggest that ... + clause</i> <i>I suggest that we ask for volunteers.</i>	<i>Why don't we/you + infinitive without to</i> <i>Why don't we just send them an email?</i>
<i>should + infinitive without to</i> <i>Its activities should be advertised more widely.</i>	<i>How about + verb + -ing</i> <i>How about meeting up after work tomorrow?</i>
<i>I would recommend + verb + -ing</i> <i>I would recommend canvassing students' ideas.</i>	<i>Let's + infinitive without to</i> <i>Let's have a party.</i>
<i>I recommend that ... + clause</i> <i>I recommend that we start a social club.</i>	<i>It might be a thought + to infinitive</i> <i>It might be a thought to put on some sun cream.</i>
<i>It would be a good idea + to infinitive</i> <i>It would be a good idea to instigate a mentoring system.</i>	

## Emails and letters

You may be asked to write an email or letter responding to a situation described in the task. You must use a style which is suitable for the person you are writing to, for example the editor of a newspaper or magazine, the director of a company or college. In your email or letter, you may have to include factual information and your own viewpoint in relation to this.

The types of letter you may have to write include

- a letter to the editor of a newspaper or magazine
- a letter of application, or giving a reference for someone applying for a job
- a letter to the directors of an organisation
- an informal letter to a friend.

You studied how to write letters in Units 7 and 13.

### Exercise 1

- 1 Read the writing task below, underlining the points you must deal with in your answer.
- 2 Write a paragraph-by-paragraph plan for the letter. When you have finished writing your plan, check that you have included all the points that you have underlined.

The company you work for is planning to move its Australian head office to a new city. Your manager has asked you to write to local estate agents to inquire about suitable premises in the city. Your letter should explain:

- what your company does
- what area of the city the company would like to be located in
- what kind of premises the company is looking for.

Write your **letter**.