Report writing

What is a report?

- A piece of information in the form of official document written after thorough investigation and firm evidence.

Objective

- Essential skill for professional(business, administration, academy, media, health and science)
- Aims to inform as clearly and succinctly as possible (short, clear and direct)
- Tries to inform; not to impress

Similar to an essay

- To be written in a formal style
- An introduction, body and conclusion
- analytical thinking
- Extensive researching for information and evidence to support a conclusion
- Careful proofreading and neat presentation.

Different from essay

- A presentation of facts and information, rather than a discussion of various opinions
- Often written for a very specific audience (e.g. an organisation that has commissioned a report)
- Is structured so that it may be scanned quickly by the reader
- Uses numbered headings and subheadings (e.g. 2.1 Executive summary)
- Uses short, concise paragraphs and dot points, where applicable
- Uses graphics wherever possible (tables, graphs, illustrations)
- May need an abstract (sometimes called an executive summary)
- Makes recommendations
- Does not always need references and a bibliography
- Often has appendices.

Language Style

- Run fast to catch the train
- If you run fast, you can catch the train
- Unless you run fast, you will miss the train
- Run fast so that you can catch the train
- You can run slow but you will miss the train
- Considering the situation, time and available modes of transport, running fast helps one to catch the train.

Types of report

- Progress report/report card
- Medical report
- News report
- Survey report
- **Feasibility report**
- Crime report
- Lab report
- Postmortem report
- **Investigative report**
- Sales report
- Program report
- Complaint report

Basic format

- Cover page
- Content
- Body of the report
  1. Background(how the task has been   undertaken)
  2. Purpose
  3. Terms of reference
  4. Work done
  5. Findings
        6. Recommendation
  6. Note of dissent(optional)
  7. References (optional)

Letter or memorandum	Provided to the person or group who commissioned the report, stating the purpose of the report, brief summary and/or recommendations, and acknowledging others who have contributed.
Title page	Clearly describes what the report is about.
Abstract or Executive summary	Approximately 200 words. States the problem, how it was investigated, what was found, and what the findings mean.
Table of contents	A list of the major and minor sections of the report.
Introduction	Sets the scene and gives some background information about the topic. States the aim/purpose of the investigation and outlines of the sections in the body of the report.
Main body	Organised into sections: what was investigated, how it was investigated it, what was found (evidence), and interpretations.
Conclusion	Summary, what the report achieved – did it meet its aims, the significance of the findings and a discussion and interpretation of the findings.
Recommendations	What is recommended as a course of action following the conclusion?
References	A list of all the sources you used.
Appendices	Any information (graphs, charts, tables or other data) referred to in your report but not included in the body.

Checklist

- Use white space to de-clutter the page/s
- Ensure the separate parts of your report stand out clearly
- Use short informative headings and subheadings
- Allow generous spacing between the elements of your report
- Use dot points/ numbers/ letters to articulate these elements
- Use tables and figures (graphs, illustrations, maps etc) for clarification
- Number each page
- Use consistent and appropriate formatting
- Use formal language
- Proofread to ensure accuracy