

The basics of writing a business report

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER
EN_BE_3801X

LANGUAGE
English

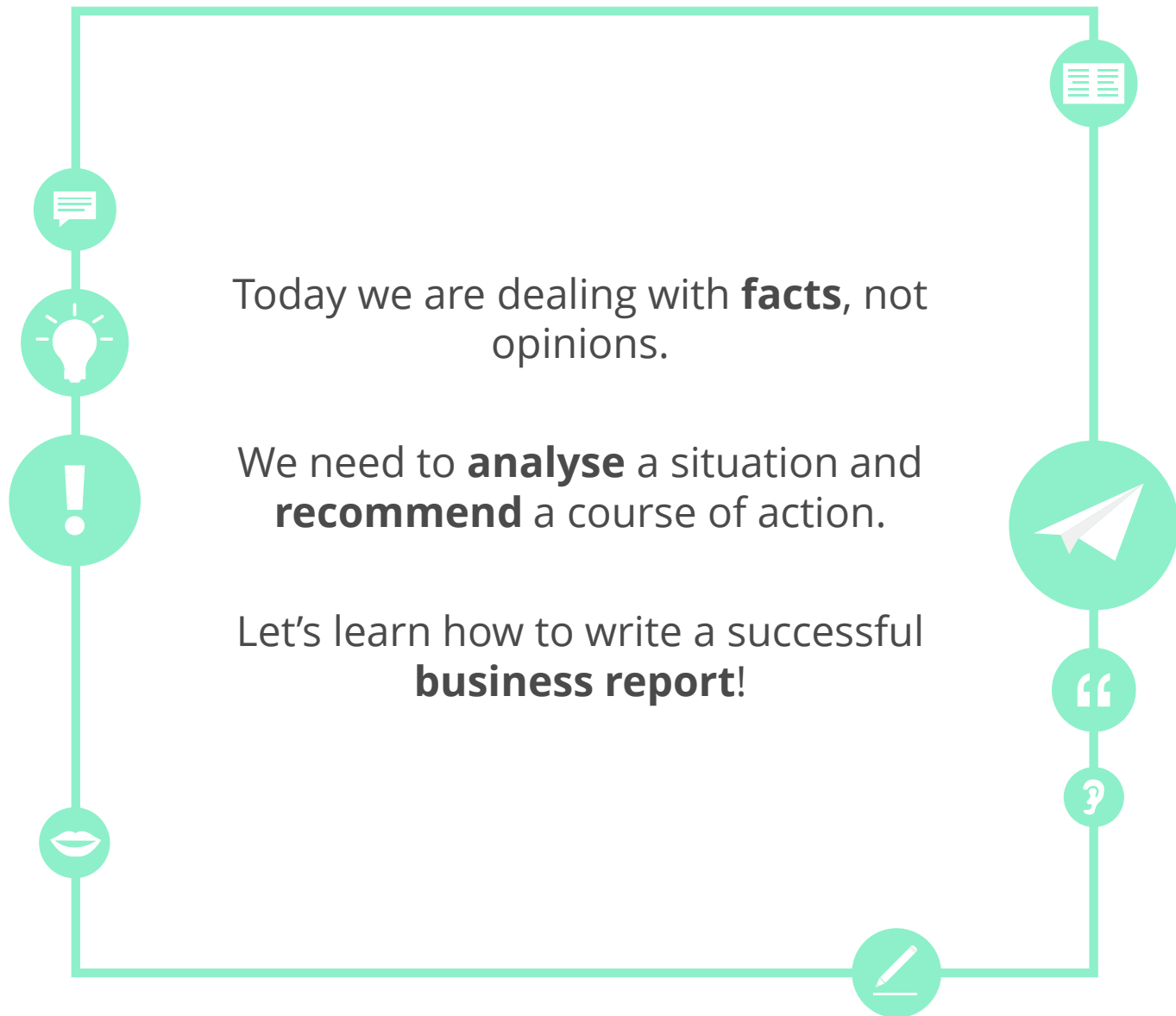
lingoda





Goals

- Can recognise and understand the function of each section of a business report
- Can use relative clauses to add extra information in a business report





Talk to the teacher

What are some **techniques** we can use to add detail and **clarity** to our sentences?





Relative pronouns

- We use **relative pronouns** to refer to a noun mentioned earlier in a sentence which requires more information added to it. They are used to join sentences together and create relative clauses.
- Relative pronouns are extremely useful for business reports because they allow you to give more details and explain yourself further.

Common relative pronouns include:

- who, whom
- that, which
- whoever, whomever, whichever

- The outgoing Prime Minister, **who** lost the election by a landslide, was due to give her speech.
- Voters around the country have delivered a verdict **that** is difficult to ignore.
- The two candidates, **whomever** the electorate chooses, have a tough job ahead of them.



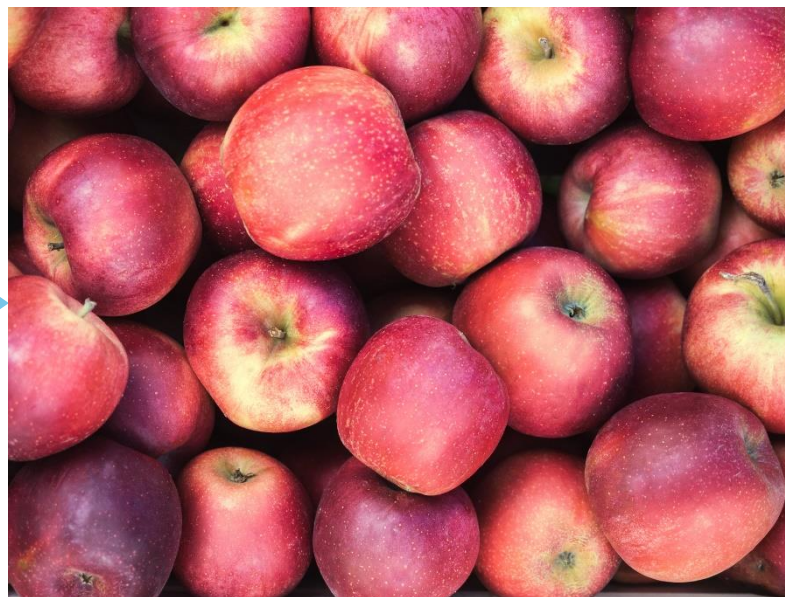
Rules for relative clauses

Relative clauses add additional information to sentences.

- They are attached to independent clauses after being joined by a relative pronoun or adverb.
- They contain a subject and a verb.
- Relative clauses function as adjectives, answering questions like what, how and which one.

- Irma offered me a basket of apples **which I accepted with relish.**

This relative clause shows us **how** I responded to Irma's offer – I accepted it with relish.





Describe using relative pronouns

Think of three sentences to describe your company or your job.

Use **relative pronouns** in your sentences.





Relative clauses and formal writing

Relative clauses are very important in formal writing.

- They are a sophisticated way to vary your sentence structure and avoid simplistic writing.
- Relative pronouns introduced with prepositions can be highly effective in formal writing. Find out how to build this advanced introductory structure below.

preposition	relative pronoun
with	whom
after	which
many of	whom
the result of	which
the best of	which





Use relative clauses to add more information to these sentences

1. We made a significant profit in the last quarter.



We made a significant profit in the last quarter, which reflected our hard work.

2. The slowdown in the economy might affect some of our operations.



3. The conference talk takes place later in the week.



4. Our marketing department has been focusing on a new campaign.



5. The project is going along without a hitch.





Talk to the teacher

What is a business report used for?



To analyse economic trends or sales figures?

To present future projects?

To report on a specific situation

Business reports

Business reports have a range of uses. They generally concentrate on facts, analysing a specific situation or problem. The data is then used to make a considered recommendation for what to do in the future. Reports are short and, as they are based on facts, they must be precise and clearly structured.



The **business report** analysed the financial difficulties of the company.



Layout

- Business reports are presented in a specific layout. A clear and well-organised structure leads the reader through the analysis and allows them to clearly understand the reasoning behind proposals or recommendations for action.



Thinking about the **structure** or **layout** of your report will improve the **outcome** of the report itself.



Layout

title page	Clearly states the topic, reason for the report, author and date. Formatting should be clear and professional.
summary	A brief synopsis of the information, designed to give people a quick summary at a glance.
introduction	Sets out what the report is presenting, summarising the problem and touching briefly on the conclusion.
developmental section	Presents the information in clearly divided sections, leading the reader clearly through the topic.
conclusion	Sets out the findings observed from the information. Often includes a recommendation drawn from the data.

Read the sample layout above and decide if this would work for you and your business, or if you would change or add anything.



Style and formality

The main aim when writing a report should be **absolute clarity**. The information should be **well-organised** and easy for the reader or audience to understand. Short sentences in **plain English** are preferable to an elaborate style. The report should be able to be clearly understood, even by someone with little knowledge of the topic.

Other things to remember regarding style:

- Business reports should be written in a **formal register**.
- **Avoid jargon** or technical language.
- Write with your audience in mind (e.g. should you use second or third person?)
- Irrelevant information that doesn't directly relate to your topic should be avoided.





speculation



Talk to the teacher

Discuss the different topics that might be included in a business report. What other topics can you think of?



sales

health of a
market

viability of a
new product



Analysing the layout

Explain how a report could explore each of these topics in greater detail. Which topic would be most relevant to your own work?

evaluation of
the market

a discussion of
the likely
outcomes of an
investment

report of a
meeting

recommen-
dation for a
future course of
action

sales outcomes

profit and loss
outlooks

a description of
a company
event

assessment of
the effectiveness
of a marketing
campaign

report of recent
company
purchases



Title page

- The **title page** includes only the most **essential** information – the title, author, date of authorship and reason/need for the report. This will help the reader understand the purpose of the report **at a glance**.

Some things to remember about the title page.

- The font should be professional and medium to large in size.
- The information should be centred.
- The reason/purpose should be placed underneath the title and should only include the most essential information. Aim for a maximum of three sentences.
- The name and address of the business should also be included, as well as the recipient(s) of the report.



Title page

Quarterly sales review: a forecast of the educational news and publications market

A report on profits and earnings in the last quarter on the monthly print magazine ***The Multilinguist***.

Prepared for ***The Lingoda Times***

William Bandt

Financial Officer

17.08.2018

26 Stanhof Avenue
Sydney, NSW, 5760

How has the title page been formatted?

What is the most essential information that has been included?



Summary

The ability to extract key points and keep information to the bare minimum is essential for an effective summary page.

Observe the sample below.

Sales in the previous quarter have been lacklustre and represent a sharp drop off from the quarter before. Data suggests that slumping markets in the news and media industries as well as a migration of subscriptions to online platforms have contributed to this result. This quarter's figures raise question marks over the viability of releasing the physical version of the magazine in its current form. Our aggressive marketing policy has failed to translate into an increased user base. An analysis of the data recommends a greater investment in online media, with the incorporation of a paywall for access to premium content.



The summary (also known as an abstract) is a brief summary of the contents of the report. Its role is to provide a very quick overview of the main points of the report. It should be no more than half a page to a page in length.



Introduction

- Effective business reports are based on a strong **introduction**.
- Use the introduction to make clear the main purpose of the report. It should summarise what is forthcoming in the report and touch briefly on the conclusions or recommendations discussed in the conclusion.

Sales of *The Multilinguist* in the last quarter have dropped by 60%, translating to a loss of 300,000 readers compared to the previous quarter. Approximately 30% of active subscriptions have elapsed and have not been renewed. Despite a significant focus on social media marketing and aggressive spending on streaming sites, the profit margin has continued to shrink. After analysing the data, the report recommends shifting the team's energy and resources to the online version of the magazine.



Developmental section

The **developmental section** is the main body and is structured around a number of key points which are linked together in a **coherent** fashion. The thread of information **develops** from point to point, allowing the reader to gain a clear overview of the subject and an understanding of the key facts in advance of the recommendations and suggestions presented in the next section.

This section uses **sub-headings**, which divide the information into clear sections, making it easier for the reader to comprehend.

Look at the sample below. Pay particular attention to how the areas are connected together.

The decline in sales of the magazine is largely due to the consumers' shift to online media. This has been largely due to an expansion in online publications that have managed to attract our demographics via free content. Moreover, overheads from the printing and distribution of the magazine are limiting our resources for investment in this burgeoning online market. In this particular case, the data shows that this market has been expanding with strong growth over successive years. In addition to this, rising printing costs have lowered the profit margin of each paper sold by 10%. While this does not necessarily mean the magazine is crippling us financially, it does raise questions about its long term viability.



Connectors

Connecting phrases are very useful in business reports to demonstrate the links between points and information. Using these phrases will increase the clarity and flow of your report.

Can you think of any more?

making a new point	showing cause and effect	showing contrast
moreover	this has been mainly due to	however
in this particular case	consequently	this does not necessarily mean
in addition to this	as a result of this	on the other hand
along with this	due to this	although it is true that



Brainstorm

**You work for a media company specialising in print publications.
Sales have been dropping sharply recently in your company.
Why could that be? Come up with some ideas for the body of your
business report.**

internet subscriptions

journalism
quality

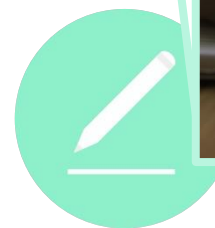
printing costs

lack of
consumer
interest in print
media



Developmental section

**Write a developmental section in seven sentences.
Use subheadings from the previous activity.
Don't forget to include connecting phrases.**





Summary

Summarise your business report in as few sentences as possible. Remember to write concisely.

Include only essential information.

Ensure that the reader can understand the entire report from the summary.

Include recommendations outlined in the conclusion.

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Conclusion

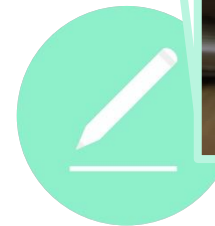
- The **conclusion** rephrases the major points and findings of the report. It also outlines any new findings or necessary steps to be taken in the wake of the information found in the report.

This report analysed the revenue from the print magazine *The Multilinguist* during the last financial quarter. The data reflects a drop in profit compared to previous reporting periods. Rising printing costs have also affected the long-term viability of the magazine. The report recommends diverting more talent and resources to the online market in response to consumer behaviour and strong growth prospects in this area. By increasing the brand's visibility online, we can increase our share of the online demographic.



Conclusion

**Write a conclusion.
Don't forget to include a recommendation based on the data in
your report.**



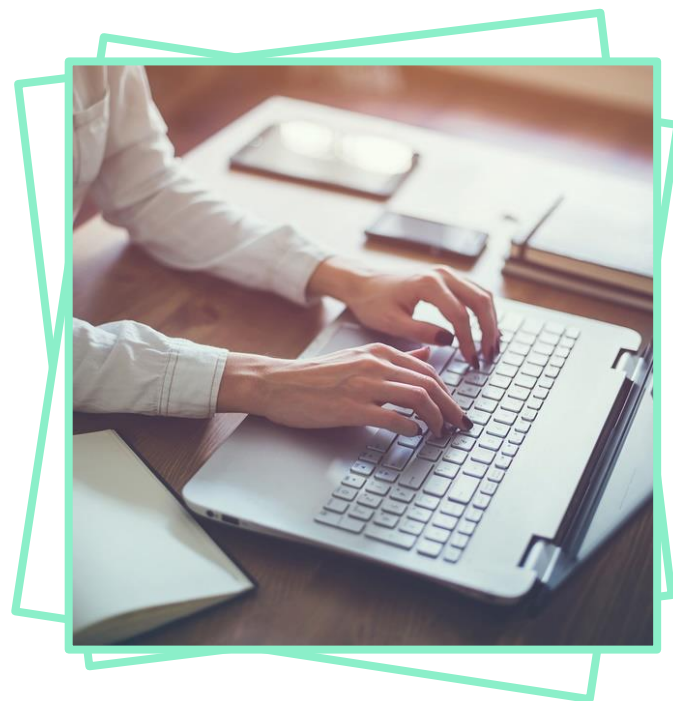


Proofread

Read through what you have written. Have you included:

- Connectors?
- Relative pronouns?
- Relative clauses?

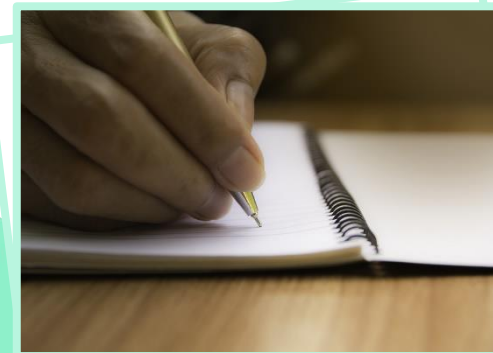
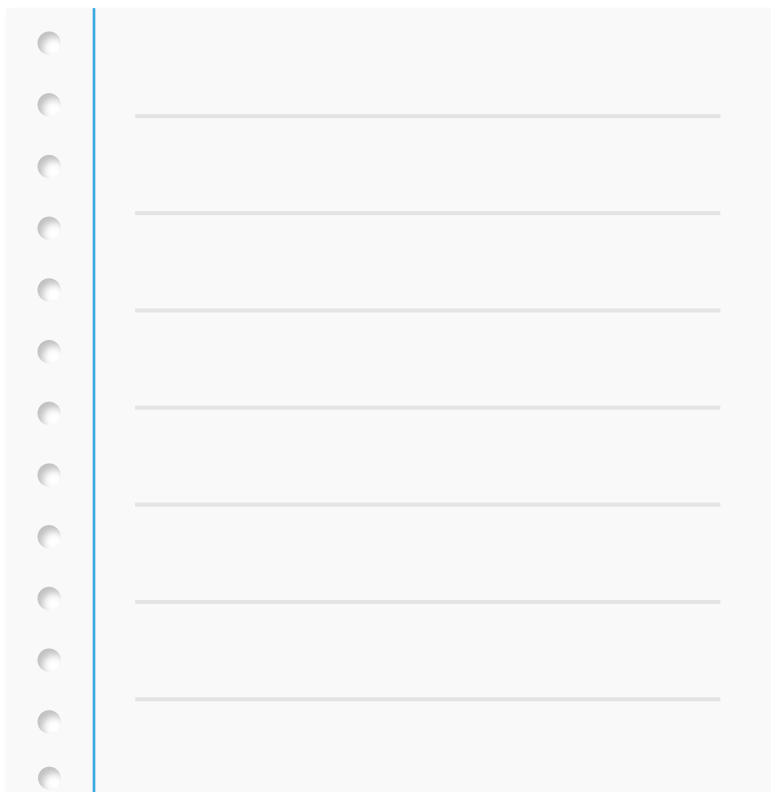
Are there any spelling mistakes?





Editing

**Fix any errors in your writing.
Once you are done, ask your teacher or classmates for
feedback.**



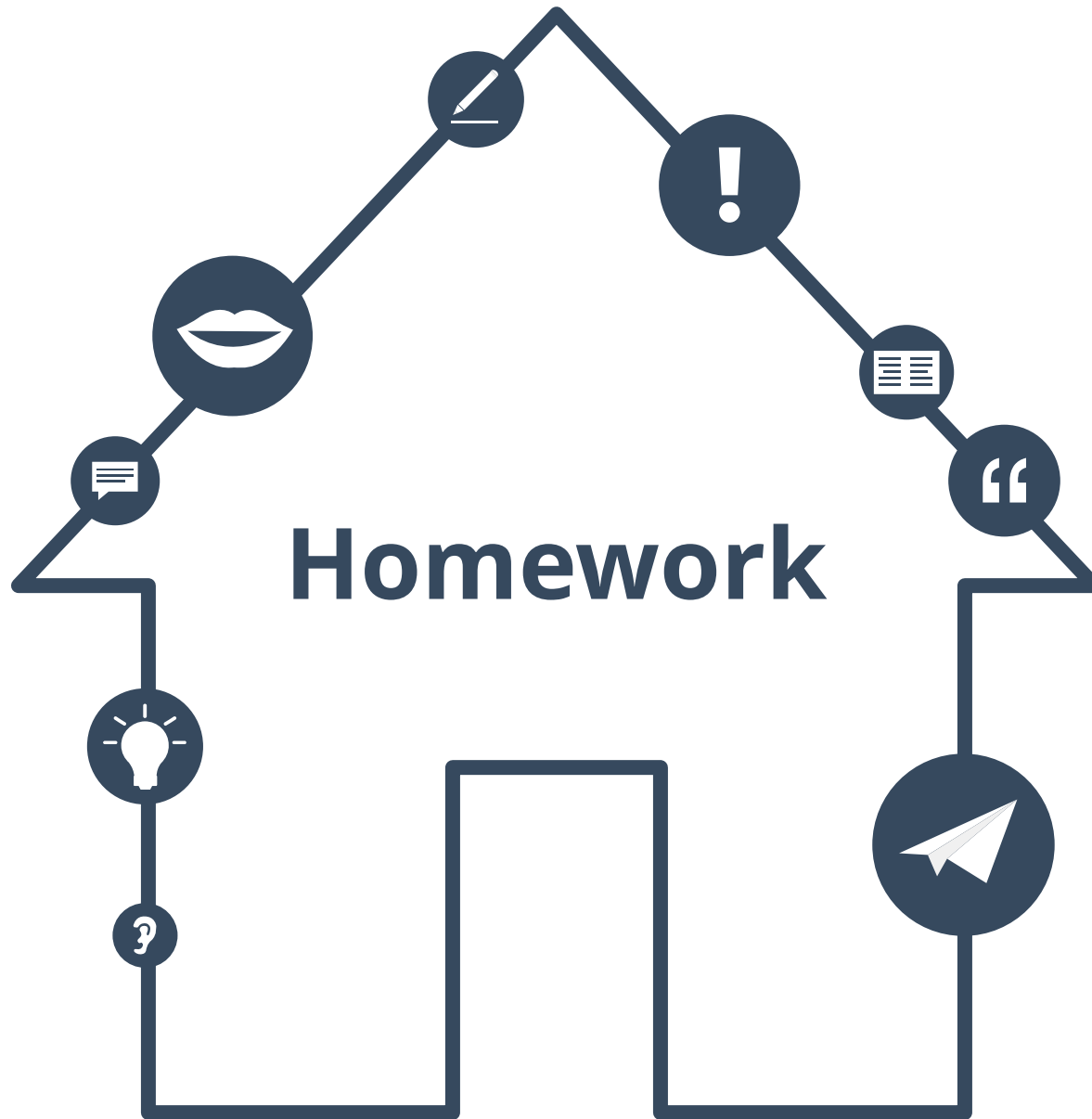


Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!







E-mail writing

Write an email to a colleague giving them some advice on how to write a business report. Remember to explain how to use relative clauses to add extra information to their report.

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To:

Subject: Writing effective business reports

Hi...

I've had some experience writing business reports so am happy to help. The first thing to remember is...



Writing

Write a short business report on one of the following topics

a recent
company
purchase

team
restructuring

report of a
business
meeting

excellent sales
growth in the
last month

economic
forecasts

own choice

This image shows a single sheet of white paper designed for writing. On the left side, there is a vertical blue margin line. To the left of this margin line are ten circular punch holes, evenly spaced vertically. The main body of the page contains ten horizontal grey lines, also evenly spaced, providing a guide for handwriting. The paper appears to be part of a binder or notebook.



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