

WRITING: A REPORT

A report is a formal document prepared by one person or a group of people who have been studying a particular subject. There are two basic kinds of reports:

- The first simply **provides information** on a topic and gives a brief conclusion or summary at the end. Example: a report on the educational system in a particular country, written to help someone research the subject.
- The second sets out to **identify strengths and weaknesses** in a particular situation and make recommendations for improvement. Example: a report on the library facilities in a college written at the request of the principal.

LANGUAGE AND REGISTER

Reports are the most **impersonal** kind of writing and it is usually best to **avoid expressing personal opinions or feelings, except, perhaps, in the conclusion.**

Instead of *I think that ...* or *I found that...* for example, you can use the impersonal “It” construction and a passive, eg: ***It seems that... It was found that ...***

It is also advisable to **avoid making very definite statements** unless you’re absolutely sure they’re true.

Instead of saying: ***It is*** for example, you can use a modal verb eg ***It could/may/might be*** or a more tentative expression such as ***It seems to be*** or ***It tends to be.***

LAYOUT AND ORGANISATION

Reports should have a clear factual **heading** and may also have **subheadings** which divide the writing into shorter sections. The information should be organised and presented as clearly and logically as possible, with a short **introduction** explaining the aims of the report and how the information was obtained and a suitable **conclusion**, summing up the information and making recommendations if necessary.

Leisure Facilities in Grimthorpe

Introduction

The aim of this report is to describe and assess the leisure facilities available in Grimthorpe. It is based on information made available by the Grimthorpe Tourist Office, and on views expressed by local people who were interviewed.

Sport

Grimthorpe has a wide range of sports facilities, both public and private. There is a large modern leisure centre in the High Street and facilities include a swimming pool, a sports hall for judo, fencing and other activities, and tennis courts. The centre runs courses in all these sports and these tend to be very popular. Membership costs £150 a year, which was felt to be rather expensive, but a special temporary membership is available to visitors. The public swimming pool on the outskirts of the town is older, less attractive and often overcrowded, but entry is only £1.50.

Theatres

There are two theatres in town, the Kings Theatre in Bee Street, which offers mainly “serious” drama and has a good reputation for its productions of Shakespeare, and the Little Theatre in Sea Street which specialises in lighter entertainment and the occasional pop concert. In general, it seems that the Kings Theatre is more popular

A report

Always include a title to explain the purpose. You could also say who the report is for.

To: The Principal of the School
From: Class 5
Subject: Ideas for the school 'eco-week'

The aim of this report is to present Class 5's ideas for events at the school during 'eco-week'.

Sub-headings are a good idea and help the reader.

State the purpose of the report.

Poster competition

Our first idea is to run a poster competition. Each student could design a poster about the environment. For example, it might show how to recycle or suggest switching the standby switch off on the TV.

Give examples to help explain.

No cars

We could ask all students to walk or cycle to school during the week. The only problem would be that some students live too far from the school. However, they could ask their parents to share car journeys with others and save petrol.

Contrast and add information where necessary.

Display

Our final plan is to have a display in the main hall of all the objects you can recycle. For example, we could show how plastic bottles can be made into coats.

To sum up, everyone was very enthusiastic about the 'eco-week'. Next we would like to advertise the events during the week by sending a letter to all teachers to give to their students.

Don't forget to summarise. You might also want to say what needs to happen as a result of the report.

Useful expressions

Introducing the report/Stating the purpose

The following reports outlines ...
The aim of this report is to ...
The report is based on ...

Introducing ideas

The first/Another idea is to ...
One possibility is to ...
Our final idea/plan/suggestion is to ...

Proposing and suggesting

We should/could ...
We would like to ...
If possible, we ...
It might be a good idea to ...
One suggestion is to ...

Giving reasons/Recommending

As result of ... we think ...
This is a good idea because ...
We recommend this because ...

Contrasting and alternatives

On the one hand ... on the other ...
One problem is .../However ...
In contrast ...

Generalising

In general ...
On the whole ...

Concluding and summing up

In conclusion ...
To sum up ...
Our final recommendation is that ...

Extra Writing Practice

Write an answer to this question.
Write your answer in 120–180 words in an appropriate style.

There is a problem with parking at your place of work (or study). There is not enough room for cars. You recently attended a meeting with a group of people to discuss ways to solve the problem.

Write a report on the meeting. Describe the best ideas and propose a solution.



Eating out in London

This report describes various options for students who want to eat out while staying in London.

1

Fast food – The majority of fast food restaurants are clean and the service is fast, but they are often noisy and crowded, and of course the food is the same all over the world.

World food – London has restaurants offering food from many parts of the world, for example India, Thailand, and China. These are often relatively inexpensive and have good – quality food and a nice atmosphere.

2 *When you don't mind spending a bit more*

Gastropubs – These are pubs which serve high-quality food and tend to be slightly cheaper than the majority of mid-range restaurants. Generally speaking, the food is well cooked and some have very imaginative menus.

Italian restaurants – You can normally get a good pasta dish or a pizza and a salad in most Italian restaurants without spending too much.

3

There are many options if you want to try somewhere special, but be aware that this nearly always means spending a lot of money. French restaurants are often quite expensive, and so are those run by celebrity chefs.

4

- Even if you have a limited budget, take advantage of the different restaurants that London has to offer.
- Don't make your meal cost more by ordering expensive drinks.
- If you really want to go to a particular restaurant, make sure you book in advance, especially on a Friday or Saturday night.
- Be careful – many restaurants in London close early on Sunday evenings.

- a Read the report on restaurants and think of a suitable heading for paragraphs 1, 3, and 4.
- b Find synonyms in the report for the expressions in Useful language.

Useful language

Talking in general

Most / _____ (cinemas in my town...) (paragraph 1)
 (Cinemas) are usually / _____ to be (quite cheap.) (2)
 In general / _____ (2)
 Almost always / _____ (3)

- c You have been asked to write a report on either entertainment or sports facilities in your town for an English language magazine. With a partner, decide what kind of information would be most useful for visitors to your town.

PLAN the content.

- 1 Decide which report you are going to write.
- 2 Decide what headings you can use to divide up your report.
- 3 Decide what information to include under each heading.

WRITE 120–180 words, organized in three or four paragraphs with a heading. Use a neutral style (no contractions or colloquial expressions).

CHECK your report for mistakes (grammar, punctuation, and spelling).