

## WRITING A REPORT

### A report:

- Presents information rather than argument.
- Is designed to be easily read with headings, sub-heading and bullet points where necessary.
- Uses short concise paragraphs.
- Uses graphics such as tables, graphs, diagrams etc.
- May need an abstract (or executive summary).
- Does not necessarily need references (or a bibliography).
- May contain recommendations.
- May have an appendix (or appendices).

Reports have a variety of purposes, for example they may intend to:

- Inform;
- Recommend;
- Motivate;
- Persuade;
- Record;
- Instruct.

### A proposal

A proposal is a type of report but has a clear purpose. The purpose of a proposal is for the reader to understand something they didn't understand before and usually to persuade the reader to take action. Proposals present data gathered via interviews, internet research, surveys etc. Proposals might examine what will happen in the future, persuade the reader to make a particular decision and express opinions (supported by objective facts).

### An evaluative report

Where you gather the information for your report by reading/accessing resources from books of readings, textbooks, journals, audio/visual material and other information you find in the library and on the internet.

### Research by reading report

Where you gather the information for your report by reading/accessing resources from books of readings, textbooks, journals, audio/visual material and other information you find in the library and on the internet.

### A business report

e.g. a marketing plan, project summary or business plan.

## Report structure

Your report should contain:

### **Title**

**Abstract/executive summary** A brief summary of what your report has covered outlining what was done, achieved, decided, concluded.

**Table of Contents** This is a list of headings, tables, and figures etc. that have been used in the report. Include the page number text to each item.

**Introduction** Stating the aim/purpose of the report, scope of the report, defining terms, giving background information and describing the context. The introduction also outlines the body of the report and how it is structured.

**Body** Giving details of how the data was gathered, justifying a methodology, recording results and findings, discussing findings.

**Conclusion** Identifying major conclusions in relation to the assignment task, made Recommendations where appropriate, identified the implications of the conclusions.

### **List of references**

**Appendices (or appendix)** e.g. transcripts, tables, diagrams, illustrations (make sure they are referenced and numbered).

It is the PURPOSE of the report which will dictate the best structure for the presentation of your ideas. All reports have sections with headings and sometimes subheadings.

Often the headings are numbered in larger reports. The number of sections, headings and sub-headings will depend on the nature of the report and the assignment guidelines.

Last Updated: 15 October 2014