Writing a report

Overview

The purpose of a report is often to present relevant information in an ordered way and to make carefully considered suggestions based on that information. Reports are usually a mixture of fact and opinion, reflecting on key facts and details to offer suggestions to the reader. Reports can also be used to offer an objective view of a situation, proposing alternatives for the reader to consider. For example, reports in a workplace might include statistics to support different plans for the future of the business so that people can decide on the best option. The audience of a report is often someone in charge, for example a teacher, or an employer, so the language and tone of a report tends to be more formal.

Tips for writing a report

Language – think about:
- **the audience that the report is for** – are you writing this report for one reader, or for a group of people such as the organisers of an event?
- **the impression you want your reader to have of you** – usually a report should be impersonal and relatively formal since you are writing to someone who is in charge. You would not normally use slang or contractions (such as don't or can't) .It is usually best to avoid attempts at humour or sarcasm.
- **the purpose for the report** – you may have been asked to make suggestions or recommendations in your report based on personal experience, or to offer an overview of a more complex situation. Try to include a range of topic related vocabulary used appropriately.
- **how to reassure your reader that your report is going to be useful** – imagine if your report was full of emotive words and personal appeals based on your own viewpoint, your reader might not be convinced that you were offering them an objective and accurate evaluation. For your report to be effective you will need to sound calm and polite.

Organisation:
- **Identify and group the key information, facts and details your report needs to include before you start writing** – the structure of a report is usually in three parts. For example:
  1. **an overview** – briefly introduce the topic of the report and the key areas you will consider. Your reader should be able to understand what you will be writing about and why by just reading this section.
  2. **a middle** – develop and support the relevant facts and opinions about the topic that you or others have noticed.
  3. **an end** – offer a brief summary of your suggestions, recommendations or solutions. Here you might like to include any new points you think should be considered in the future.
- **Organise different aspects of the report into paragraphs as appropriate** – this will help you to explain, develop and support your points.
- **Help your reader to locate the information they need more easily** – a report should be well-organised and clear. Reports often use headings to show the reader what information can be found in each section. Sometimes bullet points might also be used to highlight key information to the reader. Do not overdo these, but a precise, short, bulleted list can help to draw your reader's attention to the key points you are making.
- **Connect the points you are making logically** – for example, where you are offering suggestions based on points you made earlier you might use a linking word or phrase such as 'in conclusion', 'as a consequence' or 'finally'.

Example of a report

	Comments
To the Principal	
A report on the school career day	
Career day, held on the 20th September this year, gave many students an opportunity to discuss their existing career plans with experienced professionals. This report outlines what students felt the day offered them, what they most enjoyed about careers day and what they learned as well as how the day could have been improved further. ①	① The learner introduces the topic and outlines the key aspects the report will focus on.
Insights ②	② The learner uses clear, relevant sub-headings to show organisation and clarity.
All of those who had been asked to present on their industry were honest and open about what they see as the pros and cons within their fields. This new knowledge required students to think critically about how and whether various career paths may suit their individual interests and values. Most people ③ enjoyed the skills and personality quiz which we took part in before break. Whilst many found it fun to reflect on themselves through the quiz, resulting in high levels of engagement, some said that the results have made them think about niche career paths which they had never considered before. ④	③ The learner has grouped points together helpfully for the benefit of the reader. This shows an excellent sense of purpose.
	④ The learner uses a range of appropriate vocabulary.
Highlights	
Having discussed the career day with classmates, I noticed that some aspects of the day were mentioned consistently. ⑤ Particular highlights included the set of presentations outlined in A Day in the life and the time set aside to talk with visitors who had each been set up on their own table. Whilst a small number of students did find it difficult to drop into conversations and intimidating to approach somebody for a specific discussion about a career which they had only just been introduced to, others were more confident. It was suggested that some less formal time being to mingle at the beginning may have resulted in more beneficial or easier interactions. ⑥	⑤ The learner's choice of linking words, phrases and grammatical structures are consistently appropriate for the style and register of a report.
	⑥ The learner distances themselves from the criticism and maintains an objective perspective, reporting what was said indirectly.
Learning	
The majority of students overwhelmingly enjoyed the career day and learned a lot about themselves and what they might want to do in the future. The personality quiz certainly helped me to	

	Comments
progress with my own thinking and the presentations promoted me to look more closely at joining the navy rather than pursuing a career in banking which I had been considering beforehand. **7** **To summarise,** I personally feel that the careers day was well organised with plenty of different industries involved and overall was very useful. I recommend that the day is also run for future year groups, with changes incorporated as you see fit as I believe they will be able to benefit similarly.	**7** The learner includes a concise conclusion and offers their recommendation.