**Writing reports**

**What is a report?**

A report is written for a clear purpose and to a particular audience. Specific information and evidence are presented, analysed and applied to a particular problem or issue. The information is presented in a clearly structured format, making use of sections and headings so that the information is easy to locate and follow.

**What makes a good report?**

An effective report presents and analyses facts and evidence that are relevant to a specific problem or issue.

A well written report will demonstrate your ability to:

* understand the purpose of the report
* gather, evaluate and analyse relevant information
* structure material in a logical and coherent order
* make appropriate conclusions that are supported by the evidence and analysis of the report
* make thoughtful and practical recommendations where required

**The structure of a report**

This will depend on the particular exercise and your topic. There is no set format and you should decide what you think is appropriate. It is the style of presentation that is important, rather than exactly which headings you use. However you do need to use subheadings to show each section.

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As a general guide you should have:

*Introduction*

The introduction sets the scene for the main body of the report. The aims and objectives of the report should be explained.

*Main body of text*

This might be divided into a number of sections, for example advantages and disadvantages of a scheme. The main body of the report is where you discuss your material so you should include information, evidence, arguments and reasons as appropriate. Your points should be grouped and arranged in an order that is logical and easy to follow.

*Conclusion and recommendations*

In the conclusion you should show the overall significance of what has been covered. You may want to remind the reader of the most important points that have been made in the report or highlight what you consider to be the most central issues or findings. However, no new material should be introduced in the conclusion. This is the point to make recommendations if appropriate.