



REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

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What is a report?

A report is a formal document which is produced as the result of an investigation or research. It will often contain a considerable amount of information and therefore it will be far clearer and communicate more effectively if it is structured in easy-to-digest sections. The emphasis must be on logical presentation and ease of reference.

A report should have a title and subtitles (or subheadings) and be divided into clear sections. There is usually an introduction and a conclusion.



Hints

- Begin by stating the **purpose of your report**.
- You may use **invented statistics** to provide a succinct summary of your results.
- Use a clear layout with:
 - **Headings**. They will make it clear that your report is not an essay or review.
 - Lists of **numbered points** or **bullets** where appropriate. (DON'T overdo it, though. If you use them in more than one section, you won't be able to show the full range of structures and vocabulary you know.)
- Divide your report into **sections according to the input**.
- **Develop the ideas** in the task input.
- Include **a sentence summarising your opinion** at the beginning of the final section of your report.
- Use an **impersonal, formal style**.



Useful language for a report

Stating the purpose of the report

- *The principal aim/objective/purpose of this report is to provide a description of / to provide / to present results of / to assess the importance of ...*
- *In this report I will provide a description of / I will provide/present results of / I will assess the importance of...*
- *This report describes/provides an assessment of / describes/provides/presents results of...*

Describing how you got the information

- *I conducted a survey of / I conducted interviews with local council officers ...*
- *... responded to an online questionnaire.*
- *I visited three of the most popular ...*
- *... were invited to attend a focus group...*

Reporting your results

- *Most of those responding to the survey stated that/expressed the opinion that ...*
- *According to ...*
- *A large/considerable/significant/ proportion of respondents/informants/those surveyed said that...*
- *Nearly three quarters of the ...*

Useful language for a report


Presenting a list

- *The arguments against ... are the following:*
- *1. ...*
- *2. ...*
- *The following were the main reasons given for supporting ...: firstly, ..., secondly, ...*
- *Points our informants mentioned in favour of/against ... were:*
- *1. ...*
- *2. ...*
- *There are several ways in which ... might be ... :*
- *1. ...*
- *2. ...*

Useful language for a report

Making recommendations

- *Taking all the factors mentioned into account/In the light of the results of the survey/questionnaire, ... would appear to be the most viable solution/option/approach.*
- *I would therefore recommendClearly, more could be done to*
- *I would make the following recommendations:*
 - ...
 - ...
 - ...




An international development agency has been looking into attitudes to aging around the world. The research director has asked you to conduct a survey and write a report. Your report should discuss how young people where you live feel about older people in the community and the prospect of growing older themselves. You have also been asked to make recommendations about how attitudes could be changed.

Introduction

The main objectives of this report are to describe how young people in Gava feel about elderly people in their area and aging themselves. I will present results of a survey I conducted with a random selection of 200 young people at a local high school and in the final section I will include recommendations as to how attitudes could be improved.

Attitudes to older people

According to my survey, a significant proportion of young people never or hardly ever spend time with someone aged 65. Reasons that respondents gave for this included: they have nothing in common, the elderly don't like teenagers and lack of time. More promisingly, nearly three quarters of those surveyed (74 percent) agreed that they could probably 'learn something' from older people.



Attitudes to aging

Those responding to the survey were almost equally split between preferring to think about it as little as possible and those who never thought about it. For those who did think about it, the prime concerns were loneliness, poor health and boredom.

Recommendations

Clearly more could be done to bridge the gap between young and old in our community. I would make the following recommendations:

Set up volunteer tutoring opportunities for elderly citizens to help younger people at the high school with academic work or practical skills.

Invite young people to tutor old people in technology use, e.g. how to text/send emails in return for a donation to be used for social events.

Hopefully, increased contact between the groups will lead to greater understanding and more positive attitudes.

Report on the Annual Student Games in London

Introduction

The aim of this report is to describe my experience of attending the Annual Student Games in London, which took place in August of this year. This report will also give some recommendations for the organisation of next year's event in Lima, Peru.

Accommodation, food and transport

Finding cheap accommodation in London was firmly easy. There were plenty of youth hostels and bed and breakfasts available, which offered incredible discounts to Latin American students. And, as breakfasts and dinners were included, I only had to worry about paying for lunch (8-10 dollars a day).

Travelling through London was not difficult. There were special buses which could take you for free to the venues of the sporting events.

The social programme

The event lasted a week and was packed with enthusiastic young people. Universities from all over the world sent their "champion Olympians" to participate in track and field, football, basketball and swimming competitions.

The highlight of the event was, of course, the closing ceremony, in which the winners were presented with a medal and a posy by no other than the Queen herself.

Communication

The organizers of the event had the innovative idea of announcing the schedule for the games via e-mail, as 99% of students use smart phones and iphones. However, there was a problem with the wifi signal in some parts of the city, which made internet connectivity slow and in some cases impossible.

Recommendations for next year's games

I strongly recommend we follow in the London's organizing committee footsteps and offer accommodation, food and transport facilities to foreign students. I also believe we can adopt their communication-via-mobile-phone idea, but we have to make sure we will have a good WIFI signal available in all the youth hostels and b&bs.


Finally I suggest we invite a huge celebrity or very important political figure to be present in the closing ceremony.



What is a proposal?

A proposal is a document sent to suggest new activities or action-steps. It follows a similar structure to a formal report, but will be a more persuasive document.

There are several ingredients that help to create a persuasive proposal: it must back up any suggestions with arguments or fact; it must be creative, offering new ideas, rather than telling people what they already know; it must show an emotional commitment to the proposal; and it should demonstrate empathy, showing that you are aware of your readers' position and understand their problems.



PROPOSALS and reports have a similar layout. Reports are based on current circumstances or situations whereas **proposals are action plans for the future. You give** more space to the current situation in a report and **more space to recommendations for future actions in a proposal.**



Hints

- First things first...
- Begin by brainstorming ideas, in any order, and don't worry about language at this stage.
- Group your ideas under headings for each section of your proposal.
- Write a first draft, paying attention to the level of formality of the language.



Don't forget!

- Begin by stating the **purpose of your proposal**.
- Use an **impersonal, semi-formal style**.
- Use clear layout with headings.
- Express opinions and make recommendations in the last section of your proposal.
- Include a final sentence summarising your opinion.
- Use bullet points but not too many.



Useful language for a proposal

Stating the purpose of the proposal

- *The principal aims/objectives of this proposal are to...*
- *This proposal is intended to...In this proposal I describe/evaluate/present/assess...*

Background information

- *Comments made at the end of the questionnaires suggest...*
- *Following a survey among families of young children...Concerned members of the local community were invited to attend...A number of concerns with regard to the most recent street party were expressed by locals...*

Making recommendations and suggestions

- *A working group should be set up by...*
- *There should be an enquiry into...I recommend that a larger survey should be conducted before a final decision is reached...*



Useful language for a proposal

Final recommendations

- ▶ *The results of the survey/questionnaire suggest that the introduction of heavier fines **would seem to be the best option/choice/solution.***
- ▶ *If these recommendations are implemented, the situation is bound to improve. **Unless these suggestions are implemented, it is unlikely that** there will be any improvement in the short term.*

Proposal on how to attract more members to the English-language society

Introduction

The aim of this proposal is to give recommendations on what new events to organise in order to attract more people to join our society. **It also suggests** varied ways in which we can make our current activities more appealing.

The current situation

There are a number of cultural activities that we offer in our society such as the book club, which meets on Saturday afternoons to discuss a classic book, and the cinema group, in which a black and white film is projected once a month. While both events have proved to be popular among older people, mainly middle-aged women, there are very few young people showing interest in participating. As a result of this, the society has failed to grow and in fact our statistics show that we are actually losing members little by little.

How to attract new members


I suggest that we create events aimed at people in their early and mid-twenties. For example we can organize pop concerts, inviting the local bands who perform English covers, or fan clubs, where members can meet to talk about their favourite British actors or actresses.

We should also try to attract more males to our society and one way to do this is through sport. I recommend forming a football or tennis club. We can get together to watch the EuroCup matches or the Wimbledon games and then talk about them.

Regarding our current events, the book club and the cinema group, **I think we should** keep them but I suggest discussing modern books and passing premier films from time to time to wider our range of participants.

Conclusion

There should be no delay in creating appealing activities to attract new members, such as the suggested pop concerts, fan clubs and sport groups. **We should also** maintain the book club and the cinema group, which have proved to be successful in the past, but including the discussion and projection of some modern books and films which may be interesting to young people.



Your college currently doesn't provide enough support for students planning to spend time studying in another country. You see this notice in the library. The college is planning to introduce a special course for students planning to spend time studying in another country. The college principal invites students to send a proposal outlining any problems students may face when studying abroad and suggesting ways in which the course could address these problems. A decision can then be made about what to include on the course

Introduction

This proposal is intended to outline common issues students have when studying abroad, and suggest ways that a course could help them to deal with these. The final section makes recommendations about what should be included in the course curriculum.

Problems when studying abroad

Interviews were conducted with 20 students who have recently completed a student exchange programme. The majority of students were of the opinion that overcoming the language barrier in their new country was the biggest challenge and nearly half also said that they experienced culture shock. Other problems cited included unrealistic expectations, loneliness and packing the wrong things - particularly being unprepared for a different climate.



Ways a course could address these

A course could prepare students for culture shock by raising awareness of the phenomenon and describing cultural differences that students may encounter in their host country. To aid participants with language, a course could include some useful phrases for the first days after arrival, in addition to some resources for language learning. The course could also include a discussion about combating isolation and adjusting expectations.

Recommendations

I would like to make the following recommendations:

- Invite students who have previously studied abroad to share aspects of the culture they found surprising and give advice on what to take.
- Provide a list of useful phrases, together with suggestions of useful resources for language learning such as websites, blogs or e-books.
- Facilitate a discussion about engaging with people to avoid loneliness and isolation.
- If these recommendations are implemented, young people are bound to feel more prepared for their experience.



WEBSITES

- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/reportW/index.html>
- <http://www.statpac.com/research-papers/research-proposal.htm>
- <http://www.io.com/~hcexres/textbook/props.html>