

# Report Writing

**When asked to prepare a report, make sure that you know exactly what the purpose of the report is, who it's being written for, how they intend to use it and what the timescales involved are. Having these details clear in your mind will make it easier to prepare and write your report.**

## What is it?

A report is a systematic, well organised document which defines and analyses a subject or problem. The focus of the report might be a record of facts or events that may or may not also include your own analysis, interpretation or recommendations.

## Planning a report

Develop a basic framework for your report. With your main topic or question as a central focus, jot down your initial thoughts and start to group these together.

Consider what information you need to put into your report. Examples of the type of supporting information you might need to include are:

- Company operating or financial information
- Market or competitor information
- Customer data and feedback
- Staff performance and feedback
- Manufacturer or product specifications and costs

Remember to make a note of any sources you've consulted in order to be able to refer back to the information.

## Writing a report

Reports are typically written in sections with headings and sub-headings.

Below are the possible components of a report, in the order in which they would appear:

**Title page** – include report title, author, date.

**Acknowledgments** – include in longer reports to mention the support of particular people or organisations who may have provided information used in the report.

**Contents page** – needed if a report is 4 or more pages long.

**Executive summary** – used to set out the conditions of why the report was written, what its scope is and how it was prepared.

**Introduction** – should be no more than about 8% of the total report length. This section introduces the report and provides an outline of the conclusion or recommendation.

**Main body/findings** – this can be further subdivided according to the points and issues you are addressing in the report.

**Results** – include as a section if you have data/analysis to present.

**Conclusion** – should summarise your points from the main body of the report and show how they answer the key questions that the report sought to address.

**Recommendations** – should follow on logically from your conclusion and be specific, measurable and achievable. They should propose how the situation/problem could be improved by suggesting action to be taken with an outline of what (if any) financial implications are involved.

**Appendices** – you can include relevant, but detailed information in an appendix to the report. Examples include charts or data but must always be referenced somewhere in the report to be included.

## Tips on report writing style

- Reports should be written in an objective and impersonal manner.
- Always use clear and concise English. Avoid jargon or colloquial language.
- Write in short sentences. The best sentences are only 8 words long. The longer the sentences, the more difficult it can be for readers to follow your thoughts.
- Each paragraph should explain a single point. Keep your thoughts clear by keeping to a single idea in each paragraph.
- When proofreading and editing, make sure you are consistent your use of language.
- When laying out your report, make sure there is a balance of white space around the text to help the reader of the report digest it more easily.

## Why is it important to me?

Being a good communicator is an essential skill for supervisors and managers. You need to be able to clearly get your thoughts and points across effectively. Well written business documents will guide management decisions and planning as well as assist staff and customers.

IQ believes that report writing is an important skill for professionals working in the quarrying and minerals products industry. It features on our **Skills Wheel** which captures all the key skill and knowledge areas we believe are vital to successful career development in the industry.

## Where Next?

### **Institute of Quarrying**

IQ supports professionals working within the quarrying and minerals products industry through membership and training. These factsheets are produced across a range of topics to share ideas and best practice. Further information can be found via the resources section on the IQ website [www.quarrying.org](http://www.quarrying.org).