

## Short reports

Short reports are used to summarise information that has to be communicated to people inside or outside an organisation. They are designed to provide an overview which can be read and assimilated quickly. Many different subjects can be presented in a short report and some of the most common types of short reports are project / progress reports, business proposals and summaries of research or results. Although the length of a short report will vary depending on the amount of information and commentary that it contains, most short reports will be between one and six pages long. They should be clearly structured so that the reader can find the relevant information quickly. Short reports may also include graphic material and are often used as the basis for an oral presentation.

### Layout

Title page – indicates the subject that is being dealt with, in large font, with the name and position of the author of the report clearly indicated at the bottom of the page, together with the date of its publication.

Summary – gives a concise presentation of the report, the reasons for writing it, the most important information it contains and a general idea of its main findings. For a short report this can be simply one or two sentences.

Introduction – presents the overview, showing why the report was written and how it has been constructed.

Development section – includes the main body of information which may be divided into several subsections.

Conclusion – presents the results of the report. This might take the form of a recommendation for future action or draw the reader's attention to problems that need to be addressed.

### Language styles

Short reports are documents that use a formal writing style. They should not contain contracted verb forms like it'll or don't but use the full forms of verbs.

The language of the report should be as clear as possible. It is not necessary to use long and complicated sentences or obscure vocabulary. Using simple language in short sentences will make it easier for the reader to assimilate your message.

Try to avoid using the personal pronoun I too much. Although it is true that 'you' wrote the report, it will only put your readers off if you refer too often to your own role. Use neutral phrasing instead.

### Useful phrases

#### Connect sentences by

- showing contrast:

*However, this does not necessarily mean that ...*

*On the other hand, it is true that ...*

*While these results may appear to ...*

- showing cause and effect:

*This has been mainly due to ...*

*Consequently, additional data was obtained which showed that ...*

*As a result of this, it has not been possible to ...*

- following on to the next point that you wish to make:

*Moreover, in this particular case ...*

*In addition to this, the survey included ...*