

Formal report structure

1 Explanation of situation

Give some indication of what you are reporting on and what the circumstances are: it could be presenting findings to a committee after evaluating options, giving a witness account of an event, giving evidence after monitoring a process, e.g. a student on a week's work experience. The person receiving the report is someone in authority in an official position, and the style must reflect this.

2 First phase or aspect of report

Reports of an event, such as a school trip, have a chronological structure; others look in turn at several aspects of a proposition or several candidates for a job or award. These phases should be treated in separate paragraphs to show the change in time or topic. If evaluating people or venues, for instance, it would be logical to start with the least recommended.

3 Second phase or aspect of report

4 Third phase or aspect of report

It would be logical to mention last the aspect which is most important or memorable, or the thing/person which one has decided to give the decision in favour of or highest recommendation for.

5 Conclusion

The final paragraph of a report will make an overall evaluation of suitability or weigh up the final balance of advantages and disadvantages of a proposition. For example: *Despite occasional lapses, the student overall showed great diligence in the workplace and aptitude for the profession, and we were pleased with his general attitude and the progress he made during the course of his week in our firm;* or *Although there have been many school trips over the last few years, it was unanimously agreed that this was the best because of the attractiveness of the destination and the remarkable team spirit amongst the group.*