

Writing

Exam practice: Report

In Part 2 of the writing exam, you may be asked to write a report. A report contains facts and information which are often based on some kind of research and also may include suggestions. The report could be written for your employer, your class or a magazine, depending on its aims and contents. The key to writing a good report is to make the contents relevant and to organize it clearly. Here are some tips on writing a report.

- Make sure you answer the question and include all the relevant information.
- Remember who you are writing the report for, and how this will affect the kind of language you use (more or less formal).
- Plan your report before you start writing.
- Use headings to make your report clearer.
- Use appropriate expressions to give examples, to generalize and to link ideas.
- In your introduction, say what the aim of the report is and where the information comes from.
- In your conclusion, summarize the main points of the report.
- Check your report for mistakes when you have finished.

1 Look at this question.

This is part of a letter you have received from a pen friend:

We're doing a project at school on the types of transport and traffic problems in different cities round the world. Could you write me a short report on a city in your country to include in the project?

Write a report for your pen friend. Write between 120 and 180 words.

2 Read the model answer opposite and give each paragraph a heading. There is an extra heading which you do not need to use.

Advantages of our transport system

New developments

Problems

Most common means of transport

Introduction

Prospects for the future

This report summarizes the results of a survey into traffic problems in our city. It also describes how people travel to work and what problems they face. The report ends with a look at possible future developments.

In our city most people travel to work either by car or by bus. There are very few lucky people who can walk to work. Most people own one car but more and more families are acquiring a second car.

People who rely on buses often complain that they do not run often enough and when they do arrive, they are often full and uncomfortable. As for trains, very few people use them to travel to work because they are slow and infrequent.

The government is building plenty of new roads within the city and motorways linking our city to others. A new metro is also being planned. They are also building new pedestrian precincts, but not enough in my opinion.

I can't see many improvements in our city, except for the pedestrian streets I mentioned above. Traffic congestion is getting worse and so is pollution. There are fewer and fewer places for people and especially children to go and relax. I think life in the city will get worse rather than better unless serious action is taken soon.

3 You are going to write an answer to the question opposite. First of all, interview people in your class using the questions below.

- 1 How do people usually travel to work?
- 2 Do most people own one or two cars?
- 3 How often do buses and trains run?
- 4 Are bus fares cheap or expensive?
- 5 Is the government constructing any of the following at the moment?
roads rail links bridges underground
buildings parks pedestrian precincts
- 6 What aspects of city life do people grumble about?
- 7 Do drivers and pedestrians keep to the highway code?
- 8 What improvements are being made in your city?
What is getting worse?
- 9 What do you think are the prospects for the future?
- 10 What suggestions do you have for improving the quality of life in your city?

4 Now write your report, giving each paragraph an appropriate heading. Write between 120 and 180 words.



Which city mentioned in this unit are these two quotations about?

Hell is a city much like _____. A populous and a smoky city. (Shelley 1792–1822)

When a man is tired of _____, he is tired of life; for there is in _____ all that life can afford. (Johnson 1709–1784)

