

Higher Education Language & Presentation Support

# Writing Reports

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## HELPS (Higher Education Language & Presentation Support)

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# David Sotir - Advisor

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- Reports:
  - What type of reports are you writing?
  - What do you want to know about reports?
  - Difference – essays and reports?

# Discussion

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# Which one is a report?

- Text A



EPS WRITING REPORT

EPS WRITING REPORT

## 1. Introduction:

This report will investigate the advantages of working and living in Australia. As most residents in this country would agree, Australia offers a very high standard of living, that is often envied around the world. The following report will describe three key factors which leads people to this common assumption and will investigate these factors, namely, its weather, lifestyle issues and its multicultural and cosmopolitan inhabitants.

## 2. The Climate.

Australia is famous for its tropical and subtropical climate, which allows its people a comfortable outdoors orientated existence. Although weather patterns vary from state to state (Smith, 2008), compared with North America or European weather and seasons, Australian weather is particularly mild. This allows Australian residents to enjoy outdoor activities, sport and recreational events more so than other colder nations.

### 2.1 Rainfall Patterns.

Statistics show that average rainfall patterns in Australia are significantly lower than North America and Europe (rainfall.com.au), which further allows Australians to enjoy an outdoors existence, which is not possible in many other nations.

.....

3

- Text B



Compare and Contrast Life in Australia with that in your own country.

In comparing and contrasting life between Australia and Britain, many similarities and differences can be observed. However, in recent years it could be said that these similarities are becoming fewer and fewer. Therefore, to support this claim, an analysis of the countries' weather, multicultural factors and language will be compared and contrasted in this essay.

In discussing the weather patterns in both countries, many differences can be found. Although both countries do have distinct seasons in most areas, the weather is much harsher and cooler in Britain than in Australia. Average daytime winter temperatures in Britain rarely rise above 10°C (Smith, 2008) however, these temperatures would be considered somewhat unusual in Australia.

A further difference can be noted in the multicultural nature of both countries' populations. In Britain, there are many migrants and ethnic communities which have originated from India, Pakistan and the African continent. In contrast however, Australia has a large middle eastern migrant population, which along with Italian, Greek, Vietnamese and Chinese migrants have dramatically influenced Australian culture, food and way of life.

The obvious similarity between each country is the use of the common language of English. However, this also shows distinct differences in that it is relatively easy for a British English speaker to understand an Australian English speaker. On the other hand, it may be said that due to the hundreds of local dialects and accents that exist in Britain (Bowen, 2007:1308), it may be at times be extremely difficult for Australians to understand some British speakers, for example a Liverpoolian or a Geordie/Scouse speaker from the Newcastle region. Therefore, this can be seen as a key difference between these two countries.

In summarizing, although some similarities exist between these two countries in relation to their common language and ancestry, there also appears to be numerous differences between them also. The weather, ethnic groups and backgrounds plus the way of life in each country are particularly different. Thus, it can be stated that both countries, although often thought to be strikingly similar, are in fact markedly different.

- To convince the reader that your viewpoint about an idea is valid and supported by relevant research
- To present information in a logical way about a problem or situation you have investigated. In the workplace, this aids decision making.

# Purpose – essay or report?

- To convince the reader that your viewpoint about an idea is valid and supported by relevant research

ESSAY

- To present information in a logical way about a problem or situation you have investigated (and perhaps also analyse and evaluate the information or identify problems and recommend solutions).

REPORT

# Purpose – essay or report?

- Professional readers      ‘the client/ manager/ colleagues’
- Academic readers      ‘the lecturer’

Audience – essay or report?

- Professional readers ‘the client /manager /colleagues’

REPORTS – does assignment specify who it is for?

- Academic readers ‘the lecturer’

ESSAYS

# Audience – essay or report?



## Both require

- formal style
- introduction, body and conclusion
- analytical thinking
- application of relevant theoretical concepts
- correct referencing
- careful proofreading and neat presentation

## Reports and essays – what's similar?

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- Document a process of enquiry
- Accessible and explanatory style
- Can be scanned
- Have numbered headings and sub-headings
- Dot points *may* be acceptable
- Have short concise paragraphs
- Use graphics
- May include executive summaries
- May include recommendations
- May include appendices
- Can be produced by group

- Explore an idea or thesis
- Complex and argumentative style
- Must be read carefully
- Do not have headings and sub-headings
- Dot points are not acceptable
- Ideas linked in cohesive paragraphs
- Do not use graphics
- Do not have executive summaries
- Do not include recommendations
- Do not include appendices
- Cannot be produced by group

## Reports and essays – what's the difference?

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## REPORTS

- Document a process of enquiry
- Written for professional readers ('the client')
- Accessible and explanatory style
- Can be scanned
- Have numbered headings and sub-headings
- Dot points *may* be acceptable
- Have short concise paragraphs
- Use graphics
- Include executive summaries
- May include recommendations
- May include appendices
- Can be produced by group

## ESSAYS

- Explore an idea or thesis
- Written for academic readers ('the lecturer')
- Complex and argumentative style
- Must be read carefully
- Do not have headings and sub-headings
- Dot points are not acceptable
- Ideas linked in cohesive paragraphs
- Do not use graphics
- Do not have executive summaries
- Do not include recommendations
- Do not include appendices
- Cannot be produced by group

## Reports and essays – what's the difference?

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- Essays – question
- Question 1: Classical management theory conceptualises communication as a downward, one-way transfer of information from management to staff. What in your view makes for good leadership communication in organisations?

## Sample of an essay question

- See HELPS samples

Sample of a report  
question

- **Set of instructions** provided by client or employer (lecturer). (sample)
- **Instructions** raise **questions/problems**
  - Report should attempt to answer or solve them.
  - Each field of study may have a preferred model.
  - If instructions are vague or ambiguous.....

**Clarify with your lecturer.**

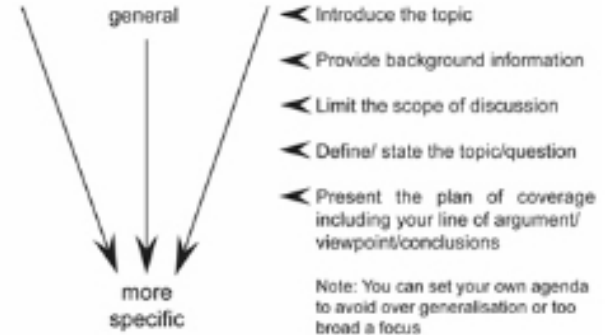
# Reports - starting point

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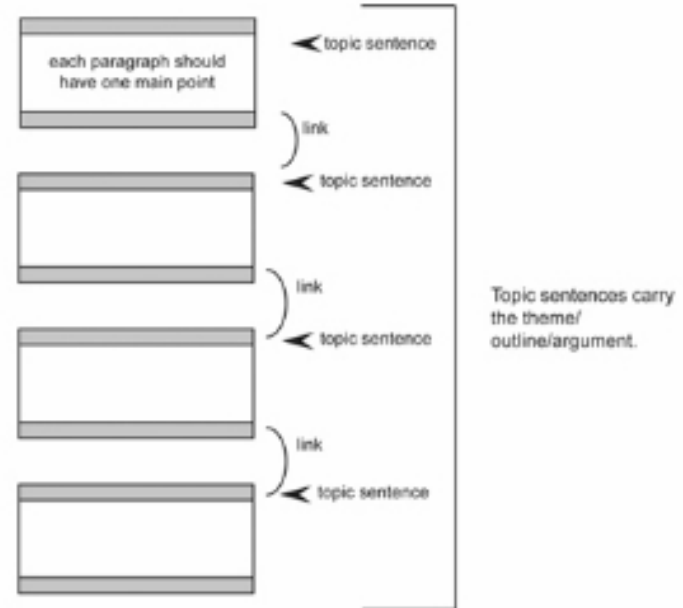
# The Structure of an Essay

## Introduction

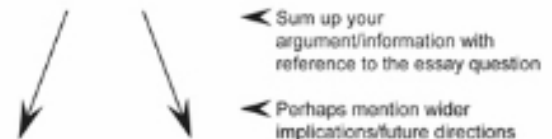
(Approximately 10% of the total length. May be one paragraph or several, depending on essay length)



## Body



## Conclusion



# Essay Structure

- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of abbreviations/glossary (if necessary)
- Executive summary/abstract (sometimes before ToC)
- Introduction
- Body sections
- Conclusion
- Recommendations
- Reference list
- Appendices (if necessary)

**In general the report includes ...**

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- Report title
  - Person for whom the report prepared
  - Person(s) who prepared the report – (name & student #)
  - Date of report/submission date
- 
- Look at the sample

# Title page

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*Note: A Table Of Contents may only be required* in long reports

- A list of the main sections and subsections of the report
- \*Executive summary **not** numbered

# Table of contents

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|                                |    |    |
|--------------------------------|----|----|
| I. Executive Summary           |    |    |
| II. PRELIMINARY COSTS          | 1  |    |
| 1.1 Staff costs                |    | 1  |
| 1.1.1 <i>Recruitment costs</i> |    | 3  |
| 1.1.2 <i>Training costs</i>    |    | 5  |
| 1.2 Equipment                  |    | 9  |
| III. SECONDARY COSTS           | 10 |    |
| References                     |    | 44 |
| Table 1                        |    | 22 |

# Numeric style

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## TABLE of CONTENTS

|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Executive Summary  | ii |
| 1. Introduction    | 1  |
| 2. Sub-heading     | 2  |
| 2.1 Sub-subheading | 2  |
| 2.2 Sub-subheading | 4  |
| 3. Sub-heading     | 6  |
| 3.1 Sub-subheading | 6  |
| 4. Conclusion      | 8  |
| 5. References      | 9  |

# Numeric Style

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**Note:** This is ONLY required in long reports

The executive summary summarises:

- The introduction (context and purpose of report)
- Methods
- Major findings
- Conclusions
- Main recommendations

# Executive summary/Abstract

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- How long should the executive summary be?
  - One page for every 5,000 words
- When should you write it?
  - After you finish writing your report

# Executive Summary

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## Introduction

- The aim of this paper is to give ...
- This paper reports on ...
- The primary focus of this paper is ...
- This report provides ...
- This study aims to ...

# Introduction

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- Divided into sections and sub-sections.
- Depending on the type of report will include
  - What you found out from your investigation
  - What those findings mean
  - How your findings relate to the question you were investigating

# Body

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## I PRELIMINARY COSTS

### A. Staff Costs

1. Recruitment costs
  - a) Management recruitment
  - b) Clerical recruitment
2. Training costs
3. Salaries

### B. Equipment

1. Costing
2. Budgeting

## II SECONDARY COSTS

### A.

# Headings – Numerals and letters

- 1.0 PRELIMINARY COSTS
  - 1.1 Staff costs
    - 1.1.1 Recruitment costs
      - 1.1.1.1 Management recruitment
      - 1.1.1.2 Clerical recruitment
    - 1.1.2 Training costs
    - 1.1.3 Salaries
  - 1.2 Equipment
    - 1.2.1 Costing
    - 1.2.2 Budgeting
- 2.0 SECONDARY COSTS
  - 2.1 and so on .....

# Headings – Numbers

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⇒ Use noun phrases for your sub-headings  
e.g. Competitive advantages of Company X

**NOT:** What are the competitive advantages of company X?

**NOT:** Company X has many advantages

# Sub-headings as noun phrases

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Which is the odd one out?

- Decrease in costs
- Increase in passenger numbers
- Increasing destinations

How can these sub-headings be made parallel?

Parallel form in sub-headings

- provide suggestions for future action
- are realistic in regard to the possibility of implementation
- are logically derived from the body of the report
- must be relevant and connected to your findings
- are written in parallel form

# Recommendations

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**Recommendation 7.3** Within the context of country programming, the Australian aid program **should give priority to** education, health, infrastructure and rural development in recognition of the critical importance of these sectors of poverty reduction through sustainable development.

**Recommendation 7.4** Ongoing sectoral evaluations of AusAID's activities **should be undertaken** and the results used to help determine sectoral policies and the activities within the priority sectors which have the highest rates of return in terms of development impact.

**Recommendation 7.5** AusAID **should develop** a new health policy giving clear priority to primary health care – particularly preventable infectious diseases and infant and maternal mortality – and to health sector management and reform. Discussions **should also be held** with the National Health and Medical Research Council and other relevant bodies with a view to giving a higher priority to health research relevant to developing countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

(from Committee of Review, 1997, *One Clear Objection: Poverty Reduction through sustainable development*, AusAID, Canberra.)

# Recommendations Ex.1

## Recommendation 9

- **That** universities co-operate in the establishment of twinning projects and mixed mode education in specific discipline. *These initiatives require a leader in each sector. Project-specific consortia could form around particular proposals. It would be unlikely that one university would lead more than one initiate. These consortia could be influential in determining the destination for AusAID-funded students.*

## Recommendation 10

- **That** the Open Learning Agency investigate the potential for the export of education and training via satellites or other new technologies such as video conferencing and computer aided instruction packages to Vietnam.

## Recommendation 11

- **That** the AVCC establish a code of ethics for Australian universities operation overseas, in addition to the existing code relating to overseas students.

*(from Fahey, S., 1996, Australian University Activity in Vietnam, AGPS, Canberra.)*

# Recommendations Ex.2

## Recommendation No. 1

The ANAO recommends that AusAID enhance the management of any further reforms to the ADS scheme by:

- preparing adequate costings of proposed changes to support the business case for change and provide a basis for monitoring and assessing the achievement of financial benefits; and
- developing and monitoring implementation plans and timetables for key reform components to enable effective project management and provide greater assurance that outcomes are achieved in a timely and cost-effective manner.

## Recommendation No. 2

The ANAO recommends that AusAID improve strategic management of ADS assistance by:

- refining the guiding principles of scholarship assistance to reflect its contribution to country aid and Australia's goal for education and training assistance;
- developing operational strategies in support of achieving improved key scheme outputs and outcomes and reducing scheme costs; and
- conducting a structured risk management analysis for ADS to better identify, assess and manage scheme risks.

~~Recommendations Ex.3~~



- Material that supports the text but is too detailed or too large to include in report, e.g. long complex table of figures.
- Lecturers may specify what should be included in Appendix – if not sure...ask!
- Don't use appendix to show a lot of information that has been collected. It should be relevant and useful.
- Appendices should be numbered and referred to in the text.

# Appendices

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- *This study involved a survey of the Chamber of Manufacturers. A copy of the questionnaire used in the survey is included in Appendix 1.*

Refer to appendix in text -  
example

**Table 2: Accommodation by Purpose: Trips with main destination in NSW 1982-1983**

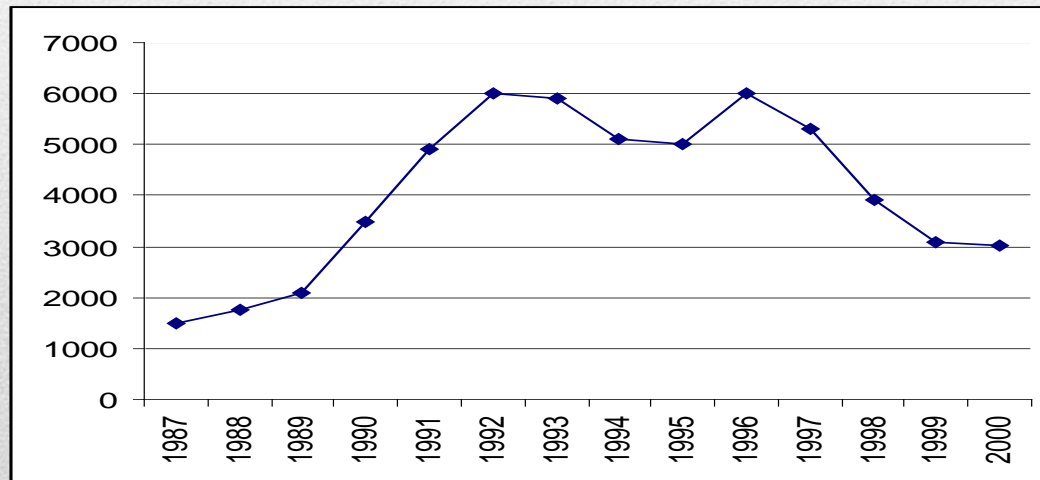
| Accommodation Type              | Pleasure/Holiday | Visiting Friends & Relatives | All Purposes |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
|                                 | %                | %                            | %            |
| <b>Hotel/motel/guest house</b>  | <b>21.6</b>      | <b>4.7</b>                   | 23.1         |
| <b>Rented house, flat</b>       | <b>7.1</b>       | <b>1.8</b>                   | 4.3          |
| <b>Own holiday house</b>        | <b>9.3</b>       | <b>3.5</b>                   | 6.3          |
| <b>Friends'/relations house</b> | <b>29.6</b>      | <b>84.2</b>                  | 47.1         |
| <b>Caravan/camping ground</b>   | <b>19.9</b>      | <b>2.7</b>                   | 10.4         |
| <b>Other</b>                    | <b>11.6</b>      | <b>2.6</b>                   | 7.8          |
| <b>Not stated</b>               | <b>0.9</b>       | <b>0.7</b>                   | 0.7          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>100</b>       | <b>100</b>                   | 100          |

Source: NSW Department of Leisure, Sport and Tourism

# Tables

# Figures

Fig. 1 AusAID sponsored students 1987-2000



Source: AusAid

- Mind map is useful: plan major sections, then decide on sub-sections.
- Reader needs to see at a glance how your material is organised.
- Headings and sub-headings do the same job as topic sentences in paragraphs in essays.
- Allocate a certain number of words to each section.

# How to plan for reports?

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- Plan
  - In group, discuss overall structure
- Write outline
  - In group, write list of contents
  - In group, agree on word/page limit for each section
- Allocate tasks for individual members –
  - for each section
    - Writer
    - Reviewers
  - Overall
    - Editor
    - Proof reader
    - Publisher

# Writing the Group Report

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- Weekly workshops
- Drop-in consultations
- Writing clinics
- Conversations@UTS
- Intensive academic English programs
- Self-help learning resources

# HELPS

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