WRITING A BUSINESS REPORT

Writing a business report is similar in many ways to writing an essay. For example, both writing styles usually feature an introduction, a discussion or a body, and a conclusion in their structure. Also, they are written in sentence form, and utilize paragraphs, among other features.

Business reports, however, are different in some other respects. The business report aims to convey or communicate a message, to a very busy person, in the most efficient, interesting, and straightforward manner, by highlighting the core components of the report. Techniques used for this purpose usually include such things as Headings, Bullets and Numbers, Underlining points, and Diagrams wherever appropriate.

A business report, usually, is structured into three parts:

- Executive Summary/Synopsis
- Discussion or Body of the report
- Summary or Conclusion

1. The Executive Summary/Synopsis

This is usually a very brief section of the report, which attempts to:

   a) Outline the name of the business (s) and other particulars relevant to the question,
   b) Encapsulate what will be contained in the report (main points), and
   c) Shows understanding of, and relevance to the question.

2. The Discussion or Body

In this section, the writer needs to provide in a logical sequence, full and relevant details that specifically answer to the question at hand. To do this, the writer would usually utilize various highlighting skills. These would include (where appropriate):

- Headings and sub-headings
- Key terms
- Bullets and/or numbers
- Underlining major points
- Diagrams and/or charts
- Relevant statistics
- Reference to examples and/or case studies

The main aim of these techniques above is to make the report easier to digest and as interesting as possible for the reader. A businessperson usually follows a very busy schedule, and sometimes has only minutes to ‘skim’ over a report that is handed to him/her minutes before an important meeting. Therefore, it needs to capture his/her attention and provide him/her with the essential elements of the report.
3. **The Conclusion or Summary**

This is usually a brief recapitulation of the main points mentioned in the report. However, some concluding points by the writer are encouraged here that would illustrate his/her full grasp of the topic. These could refer to, for example, future prospects of the business, or the likely state of the economy in a future period, and how this will impact on the particular business etc. Any statement that shows a higher level of understanding, or superiority in synthesizing complex issues affecting a business, is going to impress the teacher/marker of the report.

**Final hints!**

- Always use **business terminology** in your reports (language of business people!). Avoid using ‘slang’ words or terms.
- Do not use the ‘first person’ in your writing (we, myself, you, I...). Always use the ‘third person’ (e.g. this report will outline... it can be concluded that...etc...)
- Always aim to be ‘objective’ in your writings (i.e. make statements based on facts), and avoid being ‘subjective’ (i.e. making statements based on opinions or feelings etc...).
- **Practice writing reports** in class and by yourself. Also look at other peoples’ reports when handed back by your teacher. The Board Of Studies Website provides a lot of insights into past HSC exams, which include solutions. Also HSC Markers’ comments on these exams are also very useful.