

Writing 2 Factual reports

Write an executive summary

What do you think?

1 What factors can make a report easy or difficult to read? Think about the last report that you read.

- Did it have a clear, logical structure?
- Was it easy to follow?

2 Look at the items 1-6. Which part a-c of a report would you expect to find them in?

- 1 Main arguments, findings and evidence
- 2 Summary of the main conclusions
- 3 Recommendations for action
- 4 Appendices (section for supplementary information)
- 5 Graphs, tables, charts to illustrate key facts
- 6 Purpose of the report

- a The opening paragraphs
- b The body of the report
- c The end of the report

What do you write? 1

It is a good idea to use visual clues to guide the reader and to structure paragraphs. Look at the report extract below and match the parts with the following.

- 1 (Numbered) subheading
- 2 Bullet point
- 3 (Numbered) heading
- 4 Bold typeface
- 5 List

a → **2.0 Training**

Training budgets throughout the company were re-evaluated during the last quarter, allowing department heads to focus spending on the requirements of their staff. After consulting with departmental managers, it was agreed that seminars would be held on:

- b → {
- database analysis
 - spreadsheets
- c → } effective use of Powerpoint presentations.

d → **2.1 Database analysis seminar**

The department intends to offer one full-day training seminar in this area, although further courses may be scheduled if required. Two main training organisations were considered for the seminar: **Infos** and **Headlamp Inc.** After analysing course content, it was decided that ...

e →

What do you write? 2

An **executive summary** is sometimes circulated independently of the main report. It gives the gist of the main information and means it isn't necessary to read the entire document. An executive summary usually contains:

- the purpose of the report
- any necessary recommendations
- conclusions.

1 Match the functions 1-4 with the words and phrases a-l that you can use when writing an executive summary.

- 1 Introduce conclusions or recommendations
- 2 Give ideas that show a contrast
- 3 Add a point or idea
- 4 Focus attention on a specific topic or idea

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| a Regarding ... | e While ... | i Concerning ... |
| b Furthermore ... | f For this reason ... | j Whereas ... |
| c However ... | g Consequently ... | k As a result ... |
| d Therefore ... | h Nevertheless ... | l In addition ... |

2 Look at this extract from an executive summary and underline the correct word in *italics*.

Executive summary

Introduction

The aim of the report is to explain why sales of the Demarco CX Printer failed to reach expected targets. The product launch initially produced encouraging results in the domestic market, *whereas / regarding* the overseas market was a little slower to respond ...

Conclusions

Market research carried out at the R&D stage suggested that this market was oversubscribed. *Furthermore / Nevertheless*, we believed that the unique selling points of the CX would lead to success in this market without the need for any increase in the marketing budget. *Therefore / While* other, lower-priced brands were able to retain their market share, the cost of the CX proved ...

Recommendations

There are two main recommendations for improving sales of the CX. *Concerning / In addition* to advertising, a new advertising campaign will be needed to highlight the unique selling points. *Regarding / Consequently*, the marketing budget will need to be increased by approximately 15% ...

Task

Objective: Write an executive summary

You have written a detailed report on one of the following topics. Write the executive summary (maximum one page) for the report.

- A project that you are / have recently been involved with
- A training course that you have attended
- Main challenges for your country / company in the next five years

 Grammar reference: Linking Ideas 2, page 90