

HOW TO WRITE A REPORT

1. Don't start writing too early.

- Do your research first. Make sure you get your facts and arguments right.
- Don't waste time starting on your report and realizing you've gone off in the wrong direction.
- Know your subject, what you think and what you want to say.

2. Outline your report in one paragraph.

- Be able to explain the report you are writing in thirty seconds.
- For example, *"I'm writing a report on whether company A should do x, and based on my research, I have found that there are five key factors that company A needs to consider: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Of these, the third is the most important, and company A should ensure that it does l, m, n, o and p to ensure that it is successful."*
- Keep referring to this paragraph when you are writing. This is essential because it keeps you from going off track while writing your document.

3. Draft the skeleton structure of the report.

- This ensures a clear, logical flow that the reader can follow.
- Usually structure is something like this: Context → Complication → Key Question → Solution.
- Jot down notes under each section in bullet points.

4. Break it down: Blocks and Bridges

- Stick to the skeleton structure that you have written and break the report writing down into blocks and bridges
- Blocks are individual sections in the report, and these are linked by bridging sentences.
- Bridging sentences act to guide the reader through each block of the report.
- For example: *"As illustrated above, Company A should consider five key factors. Of these the third is the most important to the effective implementation of x. The challenges associated with this factor can, however, be overcome through a number of steps, each of which is described in detail below."*

5. Editing

- You must edit the whole report. Inevitably there will be excessive parts that can be edited to keep the reader engaged throughout your whole report.
- It is helpful to refer to your anchor paragraph while editing.
- Don't only edit content. Remember to edit structure, vocabulary and bridging sentences as well if you need to.

6. Fine-tune your Introduction and Conclusion

Tell them what you're going to tell them. Then tell them. And finally tell them what you've told them. This sounds obvious but is extremely important. You need to guide your reader through your thinking.

- **Introduction:** Tell them what you're going to tell them. *For example, Company A is looking to do x. This report provides an overview of the key factors to consider and highlights the key steps it needs to take in order to ensure the most successful implementation of x.*
- **Main body:** Tell them in detail the context, complication, key question and solution.
- **Conclusion:** Tell them what you have told them. *For example: Company A is looking to do x. As this report has demonstrated, five key factors influence the outcome of this. Based on our understanding of the market and regulatory environment, we recommend that Company A do l, m, n, o and p in order to ensure that x is done effectively.*