# NOTICE WRITING

A notice is a formal means of communication. The purpose of a notice is to announce or display information to a specific group of people. Notices are generally meant to be pinned up on specific display boards whether in schools or in public places. Notices issued by the government appear in newspapers.

**Format:**

A notice should be written in the following format:

- the name of the organisation issuing the notice
- the title 'NOTICE'
- a heading to introduce the subject of the notice
- the date
- the body of the notice
- the writer's signature, name (in block letters) and designation

| Name of organisation/office issuing the notice |
| :--- |
| Date                     Notice |
| Heading |
| Body of letter |
| Signature |
| Name |
| Designation |

**Points to remember:**

- A well-written notice must inform the readers about the 5 Ws:
  — What is going to happen, (that is, the event)
  — Where it will take place
  — When it will take place (that is, the date and time)
  — Who can apply or is eligible for it
  — Whom to contact or apply to (that is, the issuing authority)
- Only the most important points should be written.
- A.O.D. – that is, any other detail given in the question.
- One is free to add any relevant information not included in the question.
- The sentences should be short and grammatically accurate.

- They should be in the passive voice as far as possible.
- The notice should be presented within a box.
- The word limit for a notice is 40–50 words (only the words in the body of the notice are counted).
- Information given in a notice must be clear and should not cause any misunderstanding or confusion.
- A notice must be catchy and appealing – it should attract the reader's attention at once.
- Increase the visual appeal of your notice by using bold letters, catchy slogans, striking words and phrases, etc.
- Standard abbreviations are allowed.

## Marking scheme

| | |
|---|---|
| The name of the organisation, 'NOTICE', the heading and the date | — 2 marks |
| The name and designation of the person writing | — ½ mark |
| Placing the notice within a box | — ½ mark |
| Content and language | — 2 marks |

## Adherence to the word limit is important:

- If the candidate exceeds the word limit by 2 or 3 words, ½ mark is deducted.
- If he/she exceeds the word limit by 4 or more words, 1 mark is deducted.

### Value points in a notice

| **Meeting** |
|---|
| Date: |
| Time: |
| Venue: |
| Agenda: |
| Purpose: |
| Who to attend: |
| Contact Address: |
| Specific Instructions: |

| Lost and Found |
| --- |
| Article lost/found: |
| Date: |
| Time: |
| Place: |
| Identification marks: |
| Contents: |
| Whom to contact: |
| When and where: |

| Events |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Date: |
| Occasion: |
| Time: |
| Venue: |
| Eligibility: |
| Contact address: |
| Specific information: |

| Tours / Camps / Exhibitions |
| --- |
| Name and nature: |
| Occasion: |
| Venue: |
| Date: |
| Objective-information, invitation, appeal: |
| Entry fee: |
| Time duration: |
| Contact address: |
| Specific instructions – dos and don'ts: |

**Sample notices:**

1. **The Residents' Welfare Association, Green Park is organising a 'Holi Fiesta' in the locality. As the president of the association, draft a notice in not more than 50 words informing the residents about the same. Give other essential details too.**

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

**Residents' Welfare Association**
**Notice**

10 Jan 2007

**Holi Fiesta**

The Residents' Welfare Association is organising a Holi bash in the colony as per the following details:

Date    :    17 February 2007

Time    :    9 am to 5 pm

Venue   :    Green Park Club

The residents are requested to come along with their families and friends and add colour to the rejoicings.

Ravi
Ravi Kumar
President, RWA

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2.  **On the occasion of National Science and Technology Day, the school has decided to organise a Science Fair. Vikram, the secretary of the Science Society, wants to call a meeting of the office bearers of the society to discuss the arrangements for the fair. Write a notice is not more than 50 words.**

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**Delhi Public School, New Delhi**
**Notice**

13 April 2007

**Meeting of Science Society**

On the occasion of National Science and Technology Day, the school has decided to organise a fair. All office bearers are requested to attend a meeting in the School Library on 16 April 2005 at 10 am to discuss the arrangements for the fair.

Vikram
Vikram Singh
(Secretary, Science Society)

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3.  **Ram Lakhani is the Head Boy of Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigarh. He and some other students of the school are touched by the plight of the poor**

and the destitute in the state-run homes, and wish to make a difference in their lives by lessening their sufferings. They decide to raise funds for this purpose. Write a notice, not exceeding 50 words, making an appeal for generous donations.

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**Bhavan Vidyalaya, Chandigrah**
**Notice**

6 May 2007

**Attention Please!**
**Lend a Helping Hand**

Your help and co-operation are required to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate living in the state-run homes. Donate generously. Deposit your contribution to the undersigned by 13 May 2007. The money so raised will be spent on medicines and clothes for the inmates.

Ram
Ram Lakhani
(Head Boy)

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4. **You are Parthasarthy Mishra, the Head Boy of St John's High School, Dalhousie. You have been asked to write a notice regarding a sports kit bag found on the school playground. Write the notice in not more than 50 words. Invent necessary details.**

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**St John's High School, Dalhousie**
**Notice**

10 April 2007

**Found – A Sports Kit Bag**

A sports kit bag was found on the playground on 9 April 2007 during the recess period. Anyone who has misplaced a grey sports bag with huge pockets can collect it from the undersigned within two days, that is, by 12 April 2007.

Parth
Parthasarthy Mishra
(Head Boy)

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5. You are the cultural secretary of your school. Write a notice in about 50 words inviting the names of students who would like to participate in the variety programme that you are planning in aid of an old age home in your city. Items may be in the form of solo and group singing, mono-acting, magic show, dance performance, etc. Trials for the most suitable participants will be held during the zero period everyday.

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**Blooming Flowers School**
**Notice**

10 July 2007

**Sandhya Tara**

Our school is organising a cultural programme to collect funds for 'Sandhya Tara', a home for the elderly. We plan to include a dance drama, mono acting, a magic show and other items. Students who wish to participate should submit their names to the undersigned before 20 October 2007. Trials will be held daily in the zero period.

S Walia
SandeepWalia
Secretary, Cultural Society

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# WORKSHEET 8

1. There is going to be an inter-section debate for all the students of Class VIII on the topic 'Tobacco companies should not sponsor sports events'. As the cultural secretary, draft a notice providing all relevant details in not more than 50 words.

2. You are Krrish, a student of Class VIII. You have lost an expensive watch in the school premises. Draft a notice to be put up on the school notice board giving details of the watch and offering a suitable reward. Use not more than 50 words.

3. As president of the student's council of your school, write a notice is not more than 50 words asking the students of your school to donate old clothes, books and bags for the Anubhav Shiksha Kendra, a school for the underprivileged being run on your school premises.

4. The Hindustan Times Pace Programme is planning to hold fun-filled workshops on candle making and clay modelling for all Class VIII students on Children's Day in the school. As Keni Pinto, the Head Boy, write a notice informing students about it. Include necessary details and write the notice is not more than 50 words.

5. The event management company, Altitudes Expeditions, has organised an Adventure Trip of Sitlakhet in the summer vacations for interested students of Classes VIII and IX. As president of the Excursions Committee, write a notice in not more than 50 words informing students about the trip and inviting them to join.

6. Write a notice for the school notice board informing the students about the visit of the Prime Minister in your school on 20.11.2007. Write the notice in not more than 50 words asking the students to maintain punctuality, cleanliness and discipline.

7. The school has decided to organise a Christmas Carnival in the Sports Complex. The Principal has asked you, as the school Prefect, to write a notice about this carnival, inviting the students and teachers to participate in it. The notice should be written in not more than 50 words including all the relevant details.

8. The Residents' Welfare Association, New Friends Colony is organising a Diwali Bazaar in the locality. As the president of the association, draft a notice in not more than 50 words informing the residents about the same. Give other essential details about the Bazaar.

9. You are the student editor of Saagar International School, Jaipur. Write a notice inviting names of those who would like to give articles, stories, cartoons, crossword, puzzles, jokes, etc for the school magazine. Write the notice in not more than 50 words.

10. You are Rohan Kapoor, the secretary of the Science Club of your school. Write a notice is not more than 50 words informing the students about the C V Raman National Science Exhibition to be held and requesting them to participate in it enthusiastically. Inform them that outsiders, too, are welcome to this exhibition.

## Additional questions for practice

1. As secretary of the Debating Club of your school, Sacred Heart High School, Chandigrah, write a notice not exceeding 50 words inviting the students to participate in the Annual Debate for Classes VII and VIII to be held on 6 November 2006. The topic for the debate is 'Should uniforms be made compulsory in school?'

2. You are Srinjan, president of the Environment Club of your school. A notice for the school notice board is to be prepared regarding the celebration of World Environment Day in school on 15 July 2006, inviting the students to participate in it by contributing at least seven potted plants from each class. Write the notice in not more than 50 words.

3. You are Chief Warden of a Boys' Hostel. You have noticed that the boys often report late for the roll-call at night and have a tendency to damage the hostel property. Write a notice informing the hostel inmates that they should refrain from doing so or else they will be penalised. Do not use more than 50 words.

4. You are John/Jane, the secretary of the Arts Club of your school. The principal has asked you to put up a notice on the school notice board informing students about the Inter-School Art Competition to be held in your school premises on 9 November 2006. Write the notice in not more than 50 words giving details like date, time, venue, prize, etc.

5. As president of the Residents' Welfare Association, Hauz Khas, New Delhi, draft a notice to be displayed on the society notice board requesting the members to donate generously for the flood-hit victims in Mumbai. They can donate in-kind or cash. Give the necessary details in not more than 50 words.

6. You are the secretary of Springleaf Housing Society Welfare Association. Write a notice to be circulated to all the residents, informing them that there will be no water supply to your society on 24 and 25 August due to maintenance work in the underground storage tank. Write the notice within 50 words.

7. You are Subhash/Suniti. You have lost your history textbook somewhere on the school premises. Put up a notice giving a description of the book and requesting the finder to return it to you. Write the notice in not more than 50 words.

8. Your school is organising 'English Week' from 7–11 September. Deepti Joshi is in charge of the literary club. She writes a notice informing the students about the event and requesting their active participation. Parents of the students are also invited. Books by famous authors in English will be displayed, special reading sessions will be held to encourage the reading habit in children, and recitation and literary quiz competitions will be held too. Imagine that you are Deepti. Write the notice in 50 words.

9. You are Sub-inspector Mahender Singh, in charge of the Mubarakpur police station. A 6-year-old boy is reported missing. With the information you receive from the parents about the physical description of the boy, you get a notice written and put up at all the vantage points within your jurisdiction. Reproduce that notice here.

10. The Sales Promotion Manager of a cold drinks company has invited your school for a tour of their cold drinks manufacturing and bottling plant. She has also mentioned that each of the young visitors will be given a free drink of their choice. As the head boy/head girl of your school, write a notice in not more than 50 words informing the students about the programme. Include the date for the trip and any other detail you think is necessary.

11. Your school, Bloomdale's Senior Secondary School, Gurgaon, is organising an inter-house skit competition to celebrate Independence Day. Scenes from the struggle for independence are to be depicted. Auditions will be held a week before the event. You are Lila/Laxman Arya, secretary of the Cultural Society of your school. Write a notice announcing the event.

12. The principal of XYZ School, Ms Sarbani Sen, knows that her young students are aware of the threat of terrorism in our lives. She feels that although they should not live in fear, there are a few precautions that they must keep in mind. She has a notice put up on the school notice board reminding her students:

- not to pick up any bag, cell phone, doll, or even a pen that may be lying around
- to report any suspicious incident to a responsible grown-up
- to keep their parents posted about their whereabouts

Write the notice in not more than 50 words and in the correct format.

13. You are Navjot/Nayan of Class VII-C, Sunnydale Senior Secondary School. You wish to sell your previous year's Social Studies and Mathematics textbooks. They are in quite a good condition. Put up a notice on the school notice board informing your schoolmates about it. Any student who wishes to contact you regarding the books should do so during the break.

14. You are Ajay Banerji, of XYX School. The football match which your team was playing against ABC School on 20 September has been cancelled due to the death of one of the officials of the other school. As the sports captain you have to inform the members of your school football team. Draft a notice in about 50 words to be put up on the notice board of the games room. Also inform the team members that the new date for the match will be announced as soon as it is decided.

15. The students of the four sections of Class VII, Amar Jyoti High School, Faridabad, are producing and acting in a play, 'The Postoffice', with the help of their drama and elocution teacher, Ms Sushma Mathur. The play will be held in the school auditorium on 2 December 2006 at 11am. All students of the school are invited. Complimentary passes for two will be issued for the parents of the students of Class VII. Write a notice, with all the above details, to be put up on the school notice board.

## Sample Agenda #1

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:30 AM | Arrive at Headquarters, Building C.  You may park in any available space.  Meet your hosts in the lobby of Building C. |
| 10:00 am – 10:30 am | **Company** Overview Presentation |
| 10:30 am – 11:45 am | R&D Presentation and Department Tour |
| | Tour the major R&D areas of Software, Hardware, and Mechanical Engineering which will inform about the job functions in R&D associated with these degrees, allow experience of design areas, meet **Company** engineers, etc. |
| 11:45 am – 12:20 pm | Lunch |
| 12:20 pm – 12:45 pm | Intern Presentations |
| 12:45 pm – 1:45 pm | Engineering Leadership Program Presentation and Tour |
| | We will give a short presentation on the Engineering Leadership Program and its role in developing future leaders at **Company**, followed by a tour of the ELP area. |
| 1:45 pm – 2:30 pm | Leadership Panel Q&A |
| 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm | Aggie Engineers Reception & Closing Presentation |
| 3:30 PM | Depart **Company** |

## Sample Agenda #2

10 AM Arrive
Company Overview
Factory Tour
Lunch provided
Roundtable with Aggie Executives
Technical Demos
4 PM Depart

## Sample Agenda #3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 9:00 – 9:30am | Everyone | Students arrive – Meet & Greet – Sign-in |
| 9:30 – 9:45am | Butzke | Welcome |
| | | Introductions – Staff and Students |
| | | Safety Moment |
| | | Review Agenda |
| 9:45 – 10:30am | Steely | Who we are? What we do? |
| 10:30 – 11:15am | Butzke | ETP & Hiring Process |
| 11:15 – 11:30am | Christopherson | Careers at **Company** |
| 11:30 – 12:00pm | | Lunch – Video Presentation |
| 12:00 – 2:00pm | Cox | Jobsite Visit – Tour - GPLNG |
| 2:00 – 2:45pm | ALL | Panel Discussion |
| | | Recent Hire (EIT) |
| | | Manager |
| 2:45 – 3:00pm | ALL | Question and Answer Session |
| | | Student Feedback Survey |
| | | Sign-out |

**Sample Agenda #4**

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:30 - 10:00 | Arrival, Meet & Greet |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | Welcome & Introductions |
| 10:15 - 10:30 | Company Overview |
| 10:30 - 11:30 | Facility Tour (Aero Energy) |
| 11:30 - 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 - 1:30 | Business Presentations |
| |    - Aero |
| |    - Energy |
| |    - Water |
| 1:30 - 2:30 | Panel Discussion |
| 2:30 - 3:00 | Questions & Answers |

**Sample Agenda #5**

10:00 Leasing the Land for a Prospect
10:30 Exploring for Oil and Gas
11:15 Drilling for Oil and Gas
11:45 Lunch
12:45 Site Tour
1:45 Wrap-up/Questions

**Sample Agenda #6**

| | |
|---|---|
| 9:00-9:30 | Meet and Welcome Greeting |
| 9:30-10:15 | History of **Company** and About our **Company** |
| 10:30-12:00 | Tour Plant |
| 12:15-1:00 | Lunch |
| 1:00-2:00 | Discussion of Engineers in Our Company |
| |     Former students meet and greet |
| 2:00-2:30 | Exit interviews and feedback |

**Sample Agenda #7**

| | |
|---|---|
| 8:20 a.m. | Arrival time. **Prompt arrival is required.** |
| 8:30 a.m. | General introduction of agenda, speakers/students. Light refreshments with coffee, tea and Juice will be served |
| 8:45 -10:00 a.m. | Company information session (emphasis on Field Engineers) |
| 10:00 - 10:15 a.m. | Break |
| 10:15- 11:00 a.m. | Petrotechnical presentation |
| 11:00 - 11:15 a.m. | Break |
| 11:15 - 12:00 | Research, Design, Manufacturing & Sustaining presentation (Tentative) or Field Engineer Lifestyle videos alternatively |
| 12:00 - 13:30p.m: | Lunch |
| 13:45 - 14:45p.m | Tour of **Technology** (Bldg. 110) and **Technology** (Bldg. 121) |
| 15:00 p.m. | Round table, Distribute giveaways |
| 15:30 p.m. | Student Departure |

# Group Discussion

Broadly speaking, Group Discussion means a group of people or even different groups of people discussing the various aspects of a given topic. However, over the years in professional circles, particularly in today's professional world, GD has assumed a specific meaning. A GD is a part of a job selection process or of an admission process for professional courses such as MBA where a group of people or candidates are asked to speak on a given topic, to assess their communicative ability and other qualities that an organisation is looking for. Group Discussion therefore forms an important part of the selection process in multinational corporations and big Indian companies and also for admission into professional courses.

**What is it that would-be employers look for from a candidate at the time of a GD?**

1. The evaluators look for leadership qualities.
2. They look for team spirit and inter-personal skills.
3. They expect you to have good communication skills.
4. They expect you to be smart, yet friendly.
5. You should also be someone who is logical and rational.
6. They try to test your knowledge about current affairs.
7. The examiners also look for commitment and integrity from you.
8. You will also be appreciated if you have personality traits such as flexibility, initiative, drive, assertiveness, along with the power to influence others.
9. They will also test your problem solving ability and decision making ability.
10. The employer would also look for creativity in the sense of an ability to look at a topic from fresh perspectives and capability to offer innovative ideas.

**What is the Structure of a Group Discussion?**

- **Initiation:** In the GD, during the initiation you can start with a proverb or an adage or a quotation or a saying. You can also start with a brief anecdote or use rhetorical questions. However, you can tackle the topic head on by first defining the key terms.
- **Continuation:** After the initiation, in the middle portion of the GD, the discussion has to continue with different members taking turns. Each member has to listen to others carefully, and then respond appropriately to what has been said. In your speech, refer briefly to what speakers before you have said so that there is a sense of continuity. The discussion must not deviate from its focal point and must move forward logically and smoothly and make an in-depth study of the subject matter.
- **Conclusion:** After having had as much of an in-depth study within the fixed time limit, you will have to take the discussion to its logical end. Someone in the group---- usually, it is the initiator or someone else who has emerged as the natural leader of the

group--- will summarise all the major points and draw a conclusion which may be positive, negative, or better still, one that reflects a balanced view.

**Required Body Language:**

It is essential that during the GD you carry yourself in a confident manner. The body and head must be erect. Your behaviour must be pleasant, you must have a friendly look on your face, and there must be proper eye contact with the team members. Look at others with warmth instead of disdain or indifference. You must sit down at the GD table without slouching. It also helps you to be the centre of attention if you are seated right in the middle of the group.

**Checklist for GD:**

**Dos:**

1. Be clear about the topic, if necessary, ask for clarifications.
2. Seize the opportunity to initiate the discussion.
3. Allow others to speak, but you too should contribute fruitfully to the team.
4. Organise your points in your mind before you start speaking.
5. Speak calmly and logically.
6. Use concrete examples to substantiate your points.
7. Be a good team player, but also try to become the obvious choice as the leader of the group.
8. Help foster a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.
9. Maintain positive body language.
10. Use appropriate language forms.
11. Speak in natural and pleasant voice, audible to everyone.
12. Try to modulate your voice according to the requirements.
13. Listen to others very carefully and then logically connect with their ideas.
14. Be assertive and persuasive and place your points effectively.
15. Be considerate to others.
16. Be innovative in your attitude.
17. Interject firmly but politely when necessary.
18. Override interruptions politely.
19. Listen to others, weigh their opinions, but draw your own conclusion.
20. Be logical and analytical, but try to maintain your human warmth.

**Don'ts:**

1. Avoid hiding yourself in corners.
2. Don't sit with a rigid posture or be too casual.
3. Don't use negative body movements.

4. Do not be either too aggressive or be too passive at the time of the GD.
5. Do not merely keep on agreeing or disagreeing with the points of others without adding any more additional points from your end.
6. Do not show either superiority or inferiority complex.
7. Do not be rude.
8. Do not fumble during your speech.
9. Do not use language forms inappropriate to the occasion.
10. Do not deviate from the topic, or ramble for too long.
11. Do not fail to listen carefully to others.
12. Do not be unnecessarily emotional or over reactive.
13. Do not try to keep others silent by dominating.
14. Do not get into a heated discussion with any member.
15. Do not focus on only one member.
16. Do not speak too loudly or too softly or use a monotone.
17. Do not interrupt unnecessarily.
18. Do not be repetitive.
19. Do not come across as a loner who is cut off from the team.
20. Do not use wild gestures while opposing.

# Writing Resumes and Job Applications

**Learning Objectives:**

- Understanding the nature and importance of employment communication
- Knowing about resume design
- Knowing how to write a persuasive resume
- Identifying the components of a job application letter
- Knowing how to write effective job applications

**Introduction:**

Getting a job depends on many factors, some of which one cannot control. For example, one has no control over other applicants who might be more qualified, more experienced and better suited to the job at hand. But there is one factor that one can control, and that is, how well one communicates. Effective communication skills are the most important factor in helping job applicants find employment.

A resume is a selective record of an individual's background. It is basically a professional employment-seeking document that presents a summary of an individual's education, professional training, experience, skills, abilities, achievements and references. It introduces the individual to a potential employer. A resume is sent to prospective employers when an applicant is seeking job interviews. So, the main objective of a resume is winning a job interview by highlighting the applicant's fitness for a particular position.

**Resume Design:**

There is no one right design for a resume. The design of a resume largely depends on a person's background, employment needs, career goals and professional competence in the area of specialization. For best results, a resume must be designed to reflect the candidate's personality, employment goals and his/her career aspirations.

However, whatever the resume design, the resume must answer the following questions:

- How can the employer contact the candidate?
- What are his/her career objectives?
- Which institution has been attended?
- What courses (academic or professional) have been completed?
- What is his/her work experience?
- What is his/her career achievements?
- What are his/her special skills or capabilities?
- What are the honors and awards received?
- What are his/her activities/special interests/hobbies?
- Who are his/her references?

**Structure of a Resume:**

1. **Heading:** The heading of a resume includes contact information, which contains the applicant's name, full postal address with pin code, telephone number and e-mail address.
2. **Position Sought:** If applying for a solicited job position, the position sought should be mentioned so that the employer is able to distinguish the application from those who might have applied for other positions available in the organisation.
3. **Career Objective:** If responding to an advertised job position, the resume should include the applicant's career objective, which should be tailored to the position he/she is seeking. Thus, it should be a specific one-sentence focused statement expressing his career goals in relation to the targeted position.
4. **Education:** In this part of the resume, specific details regarding the applicant's education and professional training must be included. The names of the institutes attended, major areas of study, degrees/certificates received should be mentioned. Relevant training programmes, special courses, seminars and workshops that the applicant might have completed, attended, or conducted should also be included. Reverse chronological order is used to list educational information.
5. **Work Experience:** This part of the resume should provide a brief and specific overview of the applicant's work and professional experience. As prior work experience is a vital part of any hiring decision, the applicant must draft this part of the resume very carefully. Work experience should be given in reverse chronological order, by listing the most recent experience first.
6. **Special Skills, Abilities, and Aptitudes:** In this part of the resume, the applicant's special skills, abilities and aptitudes that are of significance and of direct relevance to the job applied for are listed. Examples of learned skills include computer programming, computer processing, data processing, foreign languages, machinery operation, drafting technical report and so on.
7. **Other Activities and Interests:** Extra-curricular, co-curricular, professional activities, and hobbies and interests should be mentioned in order to show that the applicant is a dynamic and energetic person who can face challenges and difficulties.
8. **Achievements:** The applicant's achievements, accomplishments and awards distinguish him from the rest. They convince the employer that he/she is an achiever and therefore worth hiring. This part should include scholarships, fellowships, awards, distinctions, commendations, certificates, or anything that shows achievement or recognition.
9. **References:** When applying for a solicited job, where the employer wants references, the names of three persons who can give letters of recommendations should be mentioned.

**Final Tips:**

- Give the Resume a Professional Look
- Be Factual, Complete and Objective
- Use Appropriate Writing Style

- Use Specific Details
- Organise the Resume properly
- Take Care of Grammar, Usage, Vocabulary, Spelling and Punctuation

**Job Application Letters:**

A job application letter (also called a ''cover letter) is written to apply for a specific position. It is a persuasive message that sells the applicant's talents to a prospective employer. It persuades the reader to believe in his/her suitability for a particular position. It is basically a self promotion instrument used by the applicant to boost his/her professional value and career prospects. Although the basic objective of every application is to draw a clear connection between the job one is seeking and one's qualifications, it serves several specific purposes. It

- Introduces the applicant to the hiring organisation
- Introduces the applicants resume
- Highlights the applicant's positive personal traits and achievements
- Shows how the applicant's special talents will benefit the organisation
- Emphasises how the applicant is right for the job by matching the requirements of the job with his/her qualifications
- Asks for an opportunity to be interviewed by the organisation

**Structure of the Letter:**

<div align="center">

**Opening:**

</div>

**Solicited Application Letter:**

1. **Mentioning Source of Information:** The letter may open by mentioning the source of the information about the job clearly--- newspaper advertisement, website vacancy notice, company circular.
2. **Matching Credentials to Employer Needs:** An important strategy to open a solicited letter of application could be to focus on the applicant's qualifications that meet the needs of the prospective employer.
3. **Using References:** Making use of references is a popular strategy to open solicited application letters. It strengthens the application because most of the employers prefer to hire known people rather than strangers.

**Unsolicited Application Letter:**

1. **Using Stimulating Questions that Highlight your Strengths:** Using stimulating questions that highlight the applicant's qualifications and strengths is an effective strategy to open unsolicited application letters. It attracts the attention of the reader by raising his/her curiosity to continue.

2. **Using Facts that Show Understanding of the Employer's Business:** Using facts that reflect an appreciation, understanding, or knowledge of the employer's business could be an effective opening for unsolicited application letters.

3. **Using Startling Statement:** An unsolicited letter of application may open by using a startling statement. Surprising or unexpected statements or statistics that surprise can be used as an attractive tool.

## Body

- **Describe Achievements**
- **Highlight Your Strengths**
- **Describe Capabilities**

## Closing

- **Refer to the Resume**
- **Restate Interest in the Company or Reinforce Suitability for the Position**
- **Express Eagerness to Meet the Employer or Directly Ask for an Interview**
- **Include Contact Information**

**Final Tips:**

- **Give the Letter a Professional Look**
- **Use a Positive Tone**
- **Show Confidence**
- **Show Genuine Interest**
- **Use Specific Details**
- **Be Factual and Objective**
- **Organise the Letter Well**
- **Follow Consistent Style**

# Sample Meeting Minutes

(Excerpted from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised Edition*)

MINUTES AND REPORTS OF OFFICERS
**Minutes**
The record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly is usually called the minutes, or sometimes - particularly in legislative bodies - the journal. In an ordinary society, unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. <u>The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done</u>. The minutes should be kept in a substantial book or binder.

**CONTENT OF THE MINUTES**.  The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following information (which need not, however, be divided into numbered or separated items directly corresponding to those below):

1) The kind of meeting: regular, special, adjourned regular, or adjourned special;
2) The name of the society or assembly;
3) The date and time of the meeting, and the place, if it is not always the same;
4) The fact that the regular chairman and secretary were present or, in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them; and
5) Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved-as read, or as corrected-and the date of that meeting if it was other than a regular business meeting. Any correction is made in the text of the minutes being approved; the minutes of the meeting making the correction merely state that the minutes were approved "as corrected".

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving, in the case of all important motions, the name of the mover, and should show:

6) All main motions (10) or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly except, normally, any that were withdrawn* - stating:
    a) the wording in which each motion was adopted or otherwise disposed of (with the facts as to whether the motion may have been debated or amended before disposition being mentioned only parenthetically); and
    b) the disposition of the motion, including - if it was temporarily disposed of any primary and secondary amendments and all adhering secondary motions that were then pending;
7) Secondary motions that were not lost or withdrawn, in cases where it is necessary to record them for completeness or clarity-for example, motions to Recess or to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn (among the privileged motions), or motions to Suspend the Rules or grant a Request to Be

Excused from a Duty (among the incidental motions), generally only alluding to the adoption of such motions, however, as ". . . the matter having been advanced in the agenda on motion of . . ." or ". . . a ballot vote having been ordered, the tellers . . . ";

8)      All notices of motions and
9)      All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his or her ruling.

The last paragraph should state:

10)     The hour of adjournment.

Additional rules and practices relating to the content of the minutes are the following:

▪ The name of the seconder of a motion should not be entered in the minutes unless ordered by the assembly.
▪ When a count has been ordered or the vote is by ballot, the number of votes on each side should be entered; and when the voting is by roll call, the names of those voting on each side and those answering "Present" should be entered. If members fail to respond on a roll-call vote, enough of their names should be recorded as present to reflect that a quorum was present at the time of the vote. If the chair voted, no special mention of this fact is made in the minutes.
▪ The proceedings of a committee of the whole, or a quasi committee of the whole, should not be entered in the minutes, but the fact that the assembly went into committee of the whole (or into quasi committee) and the committee report should be recorded.
▪ When a question is considered informally, the same information should be recorded as under the regular rules, since the only informality in the proceedings is in the debate.
▪ When a committee report is of great importance or should be recorded to show the legislative history of a measure, the assembly can order it "to be entered in the minutes," in which case the secretary copies it in full in the minutes.
▪ The name and subject of a guest speaker can be given, but no effort should be made to summarize his remarks.

**THE SIGNATURE.** Minutes should be signed by the secretary and can also be signed, if the assembly wishes, by the president. The words Respectfully submitted - although occasionally used - represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

**FORM OF THE MINUTES.** The principles stated above are illustrated in the following model form for minutes:

The regular monthly meeting of the L.M. Society was held on Thursday, January 4, 20__, at 8:30 P.M., at the Society's building, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

The Treasurer reported the receipt of a bill from the Downs Construction Company in the amount of $5,000 for the improvements recently made in the Society's building. The question put by the chair "that the bill be paid" was adopted.

Mr. Johnson, reporting on behalf of the Membership Committee, moved "that John R. Brown be admitted to membership in the Society." The motion was adopted after debate.

The report of the Program Committee was received and placed on file.

The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on suitable parking facilities near the Society's building reported, through its chairman, Mrs. Smith, a resolution, which, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact words immediately before being acted upon, incorporating all amendments]."

The resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers, which was postponed from the last meeting, was then taken up. This motion and a pending amendment were laid on the table after the chair announced that the guest speaker had received a phone message which would require his early departure.

The President introduced the guest speaker, Mr. James F. Mitchell, whose subject was _____.
At the conclusion of Mr. Mitchell's talk, the resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers was taken from the table. After amendment and further debate, the resolution was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact wording immediately before being finally voted on]."

Mr. Gordon moved "that the Society undertake the establishment of a summer camp for boys on its lakefront property." Mrs. Thomas moved to amend [page 456] this motion by inserting the word "underprivileged" before "boys." On motion of Mr. Dorsey, the motion to establish the camp, with the pending amendment, was referred to a committee of three to be appointed by the chair with instructions to report at the next meeting. The chair appointed Messrs. Flynn, Dorsey, and Fine to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

<div align="center">Lashaunda Williams, Secretary</div>

# Business Letters

"Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company" – Lord Byron

It is important for professionals to be educated on the functional importance of effective writing. In letter writing, precision and clarity of meaning are extremely important. Time is a valuable resource, and precise communication helps save the time of the writer as well as of the recipient.

To write an effective letter, one needs to understand the purpose of writing and then draft the letter focusing on the reader's perspective. To convince our readers, we need to follow these seven Cs:

Seven Cs

- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Correctness
- Completeness
- Conviction
- Cordiality
- Courtesy

## Purpose

Formal letters are written for varied purposes as mentioned below:

- To inform
- To enquire
- To request
- To complain
- To sell a product, service or scheme
- To congratulate
- To order
- To collect dues
- To make an adjustment
- To apply for job

## Structural Elements of Business Letters

- **Heading :** It is also known as the letterhead. The heading shows the organization's name, full address and phone number.

---

Hard n Soft

13, Elgin Road Bangalore – 560001

Phone:( 080) 2335810  Email:hard_n_soft@yahoo.co.in

---

- **Date:** The component refers the date on which the letter is written.

    The format of date is – 3 August 2013 or August 3, 2013

- **Inside address:** This part of the letter identifies the recipient's address and it is separated from the date by at least one blank line. It is always best to address the letter to a specific person.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mr M Sinha | | The General Manager |
| Info Industries Ltd. | | Info Industries Ltd. |
| 3-A East Patel Nagar | OR | 3-A East Patel Nagar |
| Mumbai – 400001 | | Mumbai – 400001 |

- **Salutation:** This is nothing but greeting. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word 'Dear' and includes the person's last name.

  Dear Professor Sinha                Dear Mr Pande

  And if the person's name is unknown, it is advisable to use

  Dear Sir/Madam

- **Message or The Body:** The body is written as text. It should be single spaced, with a blank line separating it from the preceding and the following parts of the letter. Skip a line between the greeting and the body and also between the body and the close.

- **Complimentary close:** This short, polite closing ends with a comma. Depending on the style of the business letter, it is written either at the left margin or its left edge. Here is a list of expressions that can be used for complimentary closing:

  Sincerely, Cordially, Truly, Faithfully, Faithfully Yours, Truly Yours, Yours Obediently etc.

- **Signature Block:** The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature block, which includes the writer's signature, name and title. The signature block is placed four lines below the complimentary close.

  Cordially,
  Mr Shivam Singh
  Sales Executive

- **Additional Elements:** Addressee Notation, Attention Line, Subject Line, Reference, Enclosure Notation, Copy Notation, Mailing Notation, Postscript

**Layouts**

Suitable an correct layout enhances the overall effectiveness of any letter. The layout helps to arrange all the elements of a formal letter in an organized manner. There are various layouts. But three major letter layouts are widely used.

- Block / Complete block: All elements except the letterhead
heading are aligned with left margin. End punctuations are
omitted.
Space after each element
- Modified block: Date, Complimentary close—aligned with right margin.
  Comma after salutation and complimentary close
- Semi Block Layout:  The heading, complimentary close and signature block are aligned vertically with the right margin. Each paragraphs begin a few spaces away from the margin.

**Sample Formal Letter with standard additional elements (Full Block Layout)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Heading** | **Residents' Welfare Association**<br>**345, Neheru Colony, Jawahar Nagar, Coimbatore – 000011**<br>**Phone: 9817580324** |
| **Date**<br>**Mailing Notation**<br>**Address Notation** | January 13, 2011<br>**By Speed Post**<br>Personal |
| **Inside Address** | Water Works Department<br>Moorthy Complex<br>Bapu Nagar<br>Coimbatore |
| **Attention Line**<br>**Salutation** | ATTENTION: Mr R. Kumar, In Charge, Water Supply<br><br>Dear Mr R. Kumar, |
| **Subject Line** | SUBJECT: No water supply on January 10, 2011 |
| **Body** | I am extremely sorry to inform you that our colony did not have any water supply on the 10$^{th}$ of this month and we had to face acute water shortage because of this.<br><br>I contacted your office on 10$^{th}$ January at 10.30 a.m. and the person at the receiving end informed us that the water supply has been stopped for certain areas because of some problems in pumping. But he ensured that the supply would resume by 5 p.m. To our dismay, we could not receive water on that day. The complaint letter signed by all the residents of this colony is enclosed. Please look into the matter and see to it that such lacuna does not occur at least in future. |
| **Complimentary Close**<br>**Signature Block** | Regards<br>Sincerely,<br>Ranbir Sinha<br>President |
| **Enclosure Line**<br>**Copy Line** | Enclosure(1)<br>Copy: Chairman, Water Board |

| Types | Objectives |
|---|---|
| Credit | To enquirer or request for loan |
| Collection | To collect past due accounts |
| Enquiry | To enquire the status of something |
| Order Placement | To place an order for products or services |
| Claim | To lodge a complaint and ask for a remedy |
| Adjustment | To inform how the complaint would be taken care of |
| Sales | To sell a product or service |
| Thank you/Follow up Letter | To express courtesy / get updated information |
| Acceptance/ Rejection | To take up/refuse an offer or assignment |
| Persuasive | To convince someone |

## Some sample letters

### Letters of Enquiry

An enquiry letter is useful when we need information, advice, names or directions. There are two types of enquiry letters – solicited and unsolicited enquiry letters. Solicited letters of enquiry are written when a business or agency advertises its products or services. A letter of enquiry is unsolicited if the recipient has not prompted the enquiry.

### Solicited letter of enquiry (Modified Block Layout)

---

**Institute of Research and Technology**
Sector -54, Gurgaon
Ph: 0124-41424344, Fax: 0124 -434956
www.irt.edu.in

15 July, 2014

Mr S. Rana
General Manager
LG Electronics Ltd.
Okhala, Mthura Road
New Delhi – 110038

Dear Mr Rana

I am writing this letter to find out more about the newly launched LCD projector by your company. We happened to see your product in operation at a recently held international conference at Pune and subsequently read a couple of your advertisements in Times of India, New Delhi.

We have gone through your website to get detailed information on the product but have not been able to find the exact information we are looking for.

We are large technical institute operating in Gurgaon with 900 students in various professional courses. To make our classroom lecture delivery more effective, we are in the process of installing LCD projectors in each class.

We would like to seek your help in finding answers to the following questions:

---

1. What are the limitations of your products?
2. How long it can be used on a continuous basis?
3. Can the colour combination on be changed on the spot?
4. What is the life time of the product?

We would appreciate technical and objective answers to these questions, which will help us come to a decision with respect to this product.

I look forward to an early response.

<div align="right">

Yours Faithfully

……………………..

Dr. R. Kumar
Dean, Academics

</div>

**Claim Letter**

A claim or an adjustment request is made when a company's product or service is not satisfactory. Followings are the objectives of writing a claim letter:

- To bring the mistake either/fault to the notice of the supplying company
- To rectify the mistake either by repair or replacement

Effective complaints letters (and any other way of complaining) should be:

- **Concise** letters can be understood quickly.
- **Authoritative** letters - letters that are well written and professionally presented - have more credibility and are taken more seriously.
- **Factual** letters enable the reader to see immediately the relevant details, dates, requirements, etc., and to justify action to resolve the complaint.
- **Constructive** letters - with positive statements, suggesting positive actions - encourage action and quicker decisions.
- **Friendly** letters - with a considerate, cooperative and complimentary tone - are prioritised because the reader responds positively to the writer and wants to help.

A complaint letter can be written for any of the following reasons:

| | |
|---|---|
| Billing Errors | Goods not matching the sample |
| Damaged Goods | Difference in agreed prices |
| Wrong goods/ quantity | Late delivery/ Non delivery |
| Unsatisfactory quality | Poor service |

**Sample Letter of Complain (Semi Block Layout)**

<div align="center">

**Steelco Furniture**

50, Lenin Srani, Kolkata- 700031

Ph: 044 – 48975612

</div>

Our Reference : TT/432

Your Reference: MB/45                                                              May 6, 2014

Apex Mattresses Ltd.

Mayurganj

Vijay Nagar

Dear Sir,

     Thank you for promptly delivering 200 mattresses in response to our order no.TT/432 on May 2 2014. However, we are sorry to state that upon checking of the consignment, we found that 55 of the 200 mattresses sent are badly soiled and faded.

     I had placed this order for your high quality, affordable products, based on the recommendation. We propose to sell these mattresses at a winter sale in our area, five days from now. Advertisements for the same have already been made through the local media.

     The mattresses received at our end must have been affected during transportation by water seepage owing to the recent rains. Therefore, I request you to replace these 55 damaged mattresses immediately. I have very little time left to arrange them from elsewhere. The damaged products will be sent back to you within two days at your cost by transport on receipt of the confirmations about replacement.

     Kindly send us the replacement within two days of receipt of this letter and oblige. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

                                  Yours sincerely

                                 ……………………………..

                                  S. Gupta

                                  Sales Manager

**Sample Adjustment Letter ( Block Format)**

<div align="center">

**J.V. Chemical Ltd.**

**G.T. Road, Gaziabad**

</div>

August 9, 2014

M/S Ashoka Leathers Ltd.

13, S.Market, Pathankot

Dear Sir,

Please accept our sincere apology for delay in execution of your order dated July 5, 2014.

Owing to month long strike in the factory, followed by power cut and strike of U.P. Electricity Board Employees, the production has remained suspended for more than one month. This resulted in our falling behind the delivery schedule. Kindly understand our position that circumstances were beyond our control.

We feel extremely sorry about this inevitable delay that has caused you inconvenience. Now the situation has changed. We are doing our best to execute the pending orders.

We hope you will be supplied your goods before August 18, 2014.

Yours faithfully,

………………………..
D. Kumar
Sales Executive

## Sales Letters

Sales letters are the most cost – effective and time – efficient means of marketing products or services. They are also a form of advertising. A good so ales letter is able to achieve the following objectives.

**Catching the reader's attention**: The most immediate purpose of a sales letter is to capture the attention of the reader. For this, the beginning of the letter should be so captivating that the reader should read.

**Creating a Desire**: Having aroused the interest of the reader, the next part of a sales letter strives to sustain it. For this the letter has to point the benefits, features, and advantages of the product.

**Carrying Conviction:** Having created a desire in the reader's heart for the product, the next step is to convince him/her of the authenticity of our claims by arranging free demonstration for the potential customer, by providing a guarantee etc.

**Inducing Action:** The closing paragraphs of a sales letter is designed to persuade the reader to take action. Generally, in this part, we are required to make the offer tempting by making special offers etc.

## A Sample Sales Letter

Florence Optical Ltd.
23. R.S.Road
Kolkata -1
Ph: (033) 5467023

29 September, 2013

Sima Mathur
243, Gandhi Marg
Kolkata -7000003

Dear Customer

Sub: Introduction of 'the ultimate' in the Hi tech series of sunglasses.

Eyes, your beautiful eyes, are the fathomless ocean of expression that deserves protection. With this aim in mind we at Florence Optical are constantly researching to provide better products to our customer.

'The Ultimate' is our latest range of optical accessories that caters to the need and comfort of your most precious eyes. The sunglasses designed incorporate the latest Light Sensing Technology. The glasses as well as the lenses have in built micro sensors that control the amount of light entering your eyes.

It is our tradition to not only employ the best of technology but also to infuse our products with the elegance and style that enhances your personality. Our limited edition range of sunglasses is simple and elegant in design without any false ornamentation. We feel that you deserve to be the first worthy owner of these glasses at a special 50% discount.

Thank you.

<div align="right">
Sincerely yours<br>
M. Sharma<br>
Chief Executive
</div>

## MEMO

A memo is a document written to pass information between people and departments within the organization. Since memos are written to deal with many official matter, one may be expected to write a memo to do any of the following  in a professional organization:

| | |
|---|---|
| To confirm | To suggest |
| To request | To explain |
| To announce | To report |
| To caution or warn | |

**Sample Memo**

<div align="center">
J.K.Chemicals Ltd

Kolkata

Interoffice Memorandum
</div>

No: AK/265

Date: 24 March, 2013

To: Mr S.D.Dutta, Accounts Clerk

From: Mr R.D. Sharma, M.D

Subject: Absence from duty on 20 March, 2013


It came to my notice that you were not present in the office on 20 March, 2013. Your application for leave has not been received yet.

Will you kindly explain the cause for being the cause for being absent? If your reply does  not reach o or before April 3, 2013, administrative action can be taken against you.


R.D.sharma

Managing Director

**This first page of a student memo is a good example of "skimmable" formatting.**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** **Mayor Coleman Young**
**From: John S. Smith**
**Re:** **Raising the non-Resident Income Tax**
**Date: March 13, 19xx**

**The budget problem facing the city is serious**. The deficit is projected by the Budget Department to reach $72 million in fiscal year 1976-1977 and reach $500 million by 1981-82. Given the sensitivity of the auto industry to the national and international economy, permanent relief may only come from a national economic recovery that is not expected for a period of years. Thus, while it is unfair to project current recessionary spending and revenue patterns into the 1980s, the short-term problems are serious and require immediate action.

**The city needs to cut the deficit by at least $30 million in the short run**. Completely closing the deficit is not in the city's interest. A deficit reduction plan which raised the entire $72 million could cause a severe economic shock to an already fragile economy and exacerbate out current problems. Instead, we should aim to maintain the deficit at its current level using the appropriate accounting methods, and await the more permanent relief that comes from an economic recovery.

**As part of a general deficit reduction problem, the city should take steps to raise the non-resident income tax rate from ½ to 1%.** Several strong arguments exist for raising the non-resident income tax rate. They include:

- **The suburbs are underpaying for service provided by the city**. Currently non-residents pay only half of 1% to Detroit in income taxes. Residents, on the other hand, pay 2%. While service reimbursement taxes are useful, many services, such as policy and fire protection, street cleaning, etc., defy easy reimbursement schemes.

- **Raising the tax rate from ½% to 1% has a relative low cost to non-residents.** The median income for a suburban worker is approximately $15,000 to $16,000. An increase in the tax rate to one percent only decrease the annual pay of a worker making $16,000 by $60, or just of $3 per bimonthly paycheck.

- **The current relative income tax levels create incentives for Detroit residents to move to the suburbs.** Currently residents of Detroit pay 2% in local income taxes, while suburbanites pay only 1%. Increasing the non-resident tax rate to 1% would change the suburbanite tax rate to at least 1 ½% and attenuate the current disincentive.

# VICTORIA BUSINESS SCHOOL
## *Orauariki*

# How to write a business report

(This handbook has been written in collaboration with
the School of Marketing and International Business, and
the Student Learning Support Service,
Victoria University of Wellington )

**July 2013**

# Contents

# Introduction

Writing an effective business report is a necessary skill for communicating ideas in the business environment. Reports usually address a specific issue or problem, and are often commissioned when a decision needs to be made. They present the author's findings in relation to the issue or problem and then recommend a course of action for the organisation to take. The key to a good report is in-depth analysis. Good writers will show their reader how they have interpreted their findings. The reader will understand the basis on which the conclusions are drawn as well as the rationale for the recommendations.

Report writing uses some of the writing skills you have already acquired. You will structure your paragraphs and reference your ideas just as you have been doing in your essays and other assignments within your Commerce degree. You might want to refer to the Victoria Business School Writing Skills Workbook you received in the first year. Report writing sometimes differs in structure and style. This handbook will help you plan, structure, and write a basic report. Remember, though, that reports will vary according to their purpose and the needs of their reader/s. Throughout your university career, different courses and/or different lecturers may have slightly different requirements for reports. Please always check the requirements for each assignment.

# 1 Planning your business report

As in all writing, planning is vitally important. The key questions to ask yourself when planning a business report are:

- what is the purpose of this report

- who are the readers of this report

- what are the report's main messages

- how will the report be structured?


## 1.1 What is the purpose of this report?

Keep in mind that the purpose of a business report is generally to assist in decision making. Be sure you are clear on what decision is to be made and the role the report plays in this decision. It might be useful to consider the purpose in this way: *As a result of this report, my reader/s will …*

For example:

*As a result of this report, my reader/s will know:*

- *how well our recycling programme is doing*

- *how to increase participation in it.*


## 1.2 Who are the readers of this report?

Consider the main reader/s, but also secondary readers. The main reader for the recycling report alluded to above is the director of the recycling programme. Secondary readers might be the facilities management team on campus, the finance team, etc.

Try to understand what the readers already know, what they need to know, and how they will use this report. You will need to give enough information to satisfy all these potential readers. You will need to use headings carefully so that different readers can use the report in different ways.

**1.3 What are the report's main messages?**

- Taking into account the information above, think carefully about the main message/s you need to convey, and therefore what information is required. Ask yourself: What are the required pieces of information I need to include?

- What are the additional pieces of information I need to include?

**1.4 How will the messages be structured?**

The modern business approach is direct (or deductive, to use a more sophisticated term). This approach presents the conclusions or recommendations near the beginning of the report, and the report provides justification for these recommendations. This approach will be used for the remainder of this handbook and for report writing in general in the Victoria Business School (Commerce Faculty).

It should be noted, however, that there is sometimes a place for the indirect (inductive) approach. This approach leads the reader through the discussion first and reveals the conclusions and recommendations at the end of the report. This approach might be used if the recommendations are likely to be controversial or unpopular (Emerson, 1995).

The next step is to construct an outline, or structure, for your report. Check for a logical flow, and check your outline against your purpose, your reader/s, and the report's relevant information requirements.

## 2 Structuring your business report

A business report may contain:

- a covering letter or memorandum

- a title page

- an executive summary

- a table of contents

- an introduction

- conclusions

- recommendations

- findings and discussion

- a list of references

- appendices.

### 2.1 Covering letter/memorandum

Often a letter is attached to a report to officially introduce the report to the recipient.  If the recipient is outside the organisation, a letter format is appropriate; if the recipient is inside the organisation, a memorandum/memo is appropriate.

> The covering letter or memorandum should:
>
> - remind the reader of their request for the report
>
> - state the purpose of the report
>
> - acknowledge any assistance
>
> - indicate future actions to be taken.

## 2.2 Title Page

The title page should be brief but descriptive of the project. It should also include the date of completion/submission of the report, the author/s, and their association/organisation.

## 2.3 Executive Summary

The executive summary follows the title page, and should make sense on its own. The executive summary helps the reader quickly grasp the report's purpose, conclusions, and key recommendations. You may think of this as something the busy executive might read to get a feel for your report and its final conclusions. The executive summary should be no longer than one page. The executive summary differs from an abstract in that it provides the key recommendations and conclusions, rather than a summary of the document.

## 2.4 Table of Contents

The table of contents follows the executive summary on a new page. It states the pages for various sections. The reader receives a clear orientation to the report as the table of contents lists all the headings and sub-headings in the report. These headings and sub-headings should be descriptive of the content they relate to (see section 3 of this handbook).

**2.5 Introduction**

The introduction sets the stage for the reader. It gives the context for the report and generates the reader's interest. It orients the reader to the purpose of the report and gives them a clear indication of what they can expect.

> The introduction should**:**
>
> - briefly describe the context
>
> - identify the general subject matter
>
> - describe the issue or problem to be reported on
>
> - state the specific questions the report answers
>
> - outline the scope of the report (extent of investigation)
>
> - preview the report structure
>
> - comment on the limitations of the report and any assumptions made.
>
> (Adapted from Emerson, 1995, p. 35)

**2.6 Conclusions/recommendations**

A business report usually needs both conclusions and recommendations. The difference between conclusions and recommendations in a report lies in the orientation to time. Conclusions typically relate to the present or past situation.

> When writing conclusions:
>
> - interpret and summarise the findings; say what they mean
>
> - relate the conclusions to the report issue/problem
>
> - limit the conclusions to the data presented; do not introduce new material
>
> - number the conclusions and present them in parallel form
>
> - be objective: avoid exaggerating or manipulating the data.
>
> (Guffey, Rhodes & Rogin, 2001, p. 391)

Recommendations are oriented to the future: what changes are recommended, or what actions are recommended for the future? They are specific, action-oriented suggestions to solve the report problem.

When writing recommendations:

- make specific suggestions for actions to solve the report problem
- avoid conditional words such as *maybe* and *perhaps*
- present each suggestion separately and begin with a verb
- number the recommendations
- describe how the recommendations may be implemented (if you were requested to do this)
- arrange the recommendations in an announced order, such as most important to least important.

(Guffey, et al. 2001, p. 392)

Although the conclusions and recommendations are presented before the discussion, they need to logically flow from the discussion. Taking a deductive approach allows the reader insight into your conclusions/recommendations early on. When your reader reads the discussion afterwards, they will follow it more easily. Here are some examples of conclusions and recommendations:

| Conclusions | Recommendations |
|---|---|
| *Home and family responsibilities directly affect job attendance and performance.* | *Provide managers with training in working with personal and family matters.* |
| *Time is the crucial issue to balancing work and family income.* | *Institute a flexitime policy that allows employees to adapt their work schedule to home responsibilities.* |
| *A manager supportive of family and personal concerns is central to a good work environment.* | *Publish a quarterly employee newsletter devoted to family and child-care issues.* |

(Adapted from Guffey, et al. 2001, p. 391-392)

## 2.7 Findings and discussion

The discussion is the main part of your report and should present and discuss your findings. It should give enough information, analysis, and evidence to support your conclusions, and it should provide justification for your recommendations. Its organisation will depend on your purpose, scope, and requirements, but it should follow a logical and systematic organisation. The discussion should be subdivided into logical sections, each with informative, descriptive headings and a number.

Where your report's purpose is to recommend the best solution to a problem, you should show clear analysis of all options. You should explain any analytical framework you used, such as SWOT or cost benefit analysis. This analysis of options can often be presented effectively in tables.

## 2.8 References

Whenever you use information from other sources, references must be provided in-text and in a list of references. The style of referencing may be dictated by your faculty or organisation. The Faculty of Commerce at Victoria uses APA. See the Victoria Business School Writing Skills Workbook (that you were given in first year in the FCOM 111 course) for information on APA referencing or see the APA manual (APA, 2002). You can download a copy of the Writing Skills Workbook from the SLSS website [http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/downloads/VBS%20Writing%20Booklet%202013.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/downloads/VBS%20Writing%20Booklet%202013.pdf) Another very useful source of information on APA referencing is the Victoria Library. Go to [http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/guides/referencingstyles.html](http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/guides/referencingstyles.html).

## 2.9 Appendices

If material is important to your discussion and is directly referred to, then it should be included in your discussion proper. However, you might want to use appendices to include supplementary material that enhances understanding

for the reader. You might use appendices to provide details on the process or analysis you underwent (or which was required by your supervisor or lecturer). When you choose to include information in appendices, you should refer to it clearly in your text (*refer Appendix A*). A single appendix should be titled APPENDIX.  Multiple appendices are titled APPENDIX A, APPENDIX B, etc. Appendices appear in the order that they are mentioned in the text of the report.

Appendices should**:**

- provide detailed explanation serving the needs of specific readers

- be clearly and neatly set out

- be numbered/lettered

- be given a descriptive title

- be arranged in the order they are mentioned in the text

- be related to the report's purpose—not just 'tacked on'.

(Adapted from Emerson, 1995, p. 41)

A checklist of elements of a good business report is provided in Appendix A.

## 3 Writing your business report

Now that you have organised your thoughts, you need to put them into writing. Ensure your writing demonstrates clarity and logic. You should think constantly about your readers and make your report easy for them to read. To achieve good readability, you should:

- use effective headings and subheadings

-  structure your paragraphs well

- write clear sentences with plain language

- keep your writing professional

- use white space and well-chosen fonts

- number your pages

- use footnotes, tables, figures, and appendices appropriately.

### 3.1 Use effective headings and subheadings

Headings and subheadings are useful tools in business writing. Ensure they are descriptive of the content to follow. In other words, rather than labelling a section *Section 2.5*, it would be better to describe it as *2.5 Justification for the high risk scenario.*  It is also essential that the hierarchy of headings and subheadings is clear.  Use formatting (font size, bold, etc.) to show headings versus subheadings. Headings/subheadings at the same level should use parallel form (the same grammatical construction). The following examples illustrate this principle.

| Ineffective headings with non-parallel construction | Effective headings with parallel construction |
|---|---|
| *Establishing formal sales organisation* | *Establish formal sales organisation* |
| *Production department responsibilities* | *Define responsibilities within the production department* |
| *Improve cost-accounting* | *Improve cost accounting* |

(Adapted from Munter, 1997, p. 53)

Use sentence case for headings. This means that your first word should have a capital letter, but subsequent words have small letters, unless, of course, they are proper nouns (Write Limited, 2013). Remember to ensure that all material placed underneath a heading serves that heading. It is easy to go off on a tangent that does not relate to a heading. Remember also that all content must relate to your purpose. Every time you write a new section of your report, check that it fulfils the purpose of the report.

## 3.2 Structure your paragraphs well

Your headings will help create logical flow for your reader, but under each heading, you should create a series of paragraphs that are also logically ordered and structured. Paragraphs should be ordered in a logical sequence beginning with the most important material first. Within your paragraphs you should also use a structure that helps your reader. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that states the main idea or topic of the paragraph. Typically a paragraph will have between 100 and 200 words and will have the following structure.

- Topic sentence (states main idea of paragraph)

- Explanation sentence (explains or expands on the topic sentence)

- Support sentences (give evidence for the idea in the topic sentence and include statistics, examples, and citations)

- Concluding sentence (optional final sentence that answers the question 'so what?'; this is your opportunity to show your critical thinking ability)

Remember to link your paragraphs well. The first sentence (usually the topic sentence) is a good place to make a link between paragraphs. One of the most common ways to link paragraphs is to use the principle, 'something old, something new'. This means you will include a word or phrase that contrasts

the topic of the previous paragraph with the topic of your new paragraph. Take a look at the topic sentence at the beginning of this section 3.2. You will see that this topic sentence links to the material before it. For an example showing how to link ideas in a paragraph using the 'something old, something new' principle, see Appendix B.

**3.3 Write clear sentences with plain language**

Academic and business writing should be clear. You want to clearly communicate your understanding of the topic and the strength of your argument. In order to do this, keep your sentences short and use plain language where you can (Write Limited, 2013). Sentences that are too long and complicated are difficult to understand. A good average length is 15–20 words (roughly 1.5 lines). Try not to go over 2 lines. Sometimes students try to use big words in order to sound academic. This is not always a good idea. If you need a big (sometimes technical) word, fine. However, if a shorter one does the job, use it. For example, *use* is better than *utilise*, and *change* is better than *modification*.

Look at the following example.

*Phase one of the project included the collection of a range of data and research material completed during 2011, which was utilised in the creation of a range of soon to be finalised analyst 'personas', and input into the planning of a new enhanced information architecture for the business's online channel, particularly resources for current analysts.*

Now look at a plainer version.

*In 2011, the team undertook phase one of the project. They collected a range of data and research material. Using this collected material, they created analyst 'personas'. They also began to plan an enhanced information architecture for the business's online channel. Current analysts can use some of the resources the team have created.*

You will notice some of the sophisticated words have changed to plainer ones. You will also notice that the sentences are shorter and easier to understand. Another change relates to 'active voice'. You will notice that the first example uses some 'passive voice': *which was utilised*. Passive voice enables writers to omit the people (or doers) from their sentences. However, readers often appreciate knowing 'who' does something. You will notice in the second example, the writer adds a doer: *team*. This means the writer can now use the active voice: *In 2011, the team completed*…All of these techniques—short sentences, plainer language, and active voice—will help your reader understand your message in one reading. This is especially important in business writing where readers have busy working days.

### 3.4 Keep your writing professional

Ensure you use an appropriate tone for your readers. Where possible, use personal pronouns *we* and *you: We recommend you check the building's foundations.* Personal pronouns create a friendly tone that is appropriate for New Zealand business and government. They also help the writer avoid the passive voice. And, as stated above, readers like to know 'who' will do something. However, sometimes you might want a more formal tone where personal pronouns are not appropriate. In these cases, you can use words like *research* or *report* as your sentence subject: *This report discusses…, This research has found that… .* Another way of ensuring appropriate tone is to avoid terms that may be interpreted as offensive to ethnic or other groups. Be careful to use gender-neutral terms. For example, use plural pronouns (*they* when referring to *clients*) rather than gender-specific pronouns (*he* or *he/she).* Another aspect of tone relates to the use of contractions. Contractions are words like *we've* or *it's*. They are informal. For many business reports and for all academic reports, you will need to avoid them and write *we have* or *it is*.

Other important characteristics of professional writing are editing and proofreading. You should leave 24 hours between writing your draft and editing it. You should also leave another 24 hours between editing and proofreading. Leaving time between these stages of the writing process allows

you to detach yourself from your writing and put yourself in your reader's shoes. When editing, check for:

- illogical structure

- missing headings

- irrelevant or missing content

- unnecessary content

- redundant phrases or words.

When proofreading, check for:

- grammar

- punctuation

- spelling

- formatting

- consistency.

Remember to leave enough time for these last two stages. Thorough editing and proofreading will make a big difference to the readability of your report (as well as to your marks!), and it is a courtesy to the reader.

**3.5 Use white space and well-chosen fonts**

White space refers to the empty space on the page. Business reports which have a more balanced use of white space and text are easier to read and more effectively communicate main points and subordinate ideas. Create white space by:

- using lots of headings and subheadings

- creating large margins along all edges (usually 2.5–3cm)

- breaking up your page with tables, charts, and graphs where possible

- using bulleted lists.

### 3.6 Number your pages

Your title page has no number. Use Roman numerals for the executive summary and table of contents (i, ii, iii), and Arabic numbers for the remainder of the report
(1, 2, 3 …).

### 3.7 Use footnotes, tables, figures, and appendices appropriately

Footnotes should be used sparingly. Points that are important can usually be integrated into the text. Footnotes or endnotes should not be used for referencing (see References above).

In business reports, tables and figures are often used to represent data, processes, etc. Tables and figures should be inserted in the text of the document, close to the discussion of the table/figure. If the information is something which the reader **could** refer to rather than **should** refer to, then it may go in the appendices. Tables and figures have different purposes. A table contains an array of numbers or text (such as a SWOT table). A figure is something that contains graphical content, such as graphs created in Excel, organisational charts, or flow charts.

Insert each table/figure one-and-a-half or two lines below the text.  The table/figure should be identified with a label and title which describes the content, for example, *Table 1. GDP of New Zealand, 1988–2002.*

If a table, figure, or appendix is included in a document, then there must be text that refers to it!  The text should refer to it by name *(As Table 1 shows ….)*.  The text should explain the highlights of the table or figure, not every detail.  Do not leave it to the reader to try to figure out why you included the table or figure in your document. At the same time, ensure that your tables/figures supplement and clarify the text but do not completely duplicate it. Also ensure that there is sufficient information in the table or figure so that the reader can understand it without having to consult the text.

Footnotes immediately underneath the table or figure should be used to explain all abbreviations and symbols used. Do not forget to add the source of your material.

## 4 Concluding remarks

Now that you have the tools to develop your report, your communication should be more efficient and effective.  Individual schools may have specific requirements for your report, so check with your course coordinators in case they have specific requirements. For example, the School of Marketing and International Business provides the guide attached in Appendix C. A sample report for general business writing is provided in Appendix D.

Don't forget to make use of the resources at Student Learning Support Service should you require more guidance. Happy writing!

## References

APA. (2002). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Emerson, L. (Ed.) (1995). *Writing guidelines for business students*. Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press.

Guffey, M. E., Rhodes, K., & Rogin, P. (2001). *Business communication: Process and product* (3rd Canadian ed.). Scarborough, Ontario: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Munter, M. (1997). *Guide to managerial communication: Effective business writing and speaking* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Write Limited, (2013). *The Write Style Guide for New Zealanders: A manual for business editing*. Wellington, New Zealand: Write Limited.

# Appendix A: Checklist of a business report

☐ The report fulfils its purpose

☐ The report is oriented to the intended reader/s

☐ The report contains all appropriate elements (executive summary, table of contents …)

☐ The discussion has descriptive and appropriately formatted headings and subheadings

☐ The discussion contains thorough analysis of findings as well as logical flow

☐ The report has been edited for section cohesiveness and good paragraph structure

☐ The report has been proofread for sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and consistency

☐ Tables and figures are formatted correctly and labelled

☐ Tables, figures, and appendices are referred to within the text / discussion

☐ Quotations from other sources are referenced

☐ Thoughts and ideas paraphrased from other sources are referenced

☐ The reference list is formatted properly

☐ The cover page has all necessary details

☐ Appendices are used to support the discussion, but tables / figures which are essential to the discussion are included within the text

**Appendix B: Linking ideas within sentences and paragraphs**

- When structuring sentences, the subject and verb should occur as closely together as possible. For example, *The PLC is important,* not *The PLC, which has been around a long time, and has seen wide use, in many contexts, continents, industries, product categories, and so forth, is important.*

- Place the material you want to emphasize at the stress position in the sentence. In a short sentence, the stress position is usually at the end of the sentence. You want to emphasize new material. For example, assuming you have already introduced the PLC, and the point you want to make next is that it is important, you would write, *The PLC is important*, rather than, *An important concept is the PLC*.

- In the above illustration, when you start the paragraph with the sentence, *The PLC is important,* you have accomplished two things. First, you have made the point that the purpose of the paragraph is to argue that the PLC is important. Second, the notion that it is important is no longer new information. Subsequent sentences should provide new information that supports that point.

- The next sentence, for example, might be:
  *It is important because it explains why firms must develop new products*;
  or:
  *It is important for three reasons. The first reason is .....*; or:
  *It is important for many reasons. One important reason is .....*

  Note that the stressed part of the previous sentence is no longer new and has been moved to the front of the current sentence. The new information in the current sentence is a reason why the PLC is important. The reason is placed in the stress position.

- The same pattern applies to the following sentences: *The PLC is important. It is important because it explains why firms must develop new products. New products must be developed because competitors enter the firm's markets, offerings become more homogeneous, prices decrease, and margins are reduced.*

## Appendix C: Specific report requirements

For all reports, be sure that you adhere to the requirements of your particular organisation. In New Zealand business and government, these requirements will usually be stated in your organisation's style guide. A style guide is a handbook telling writers which conventions of grammar, punctuation, and tone to follow. It also tells writers how to format their documents. At Victoria, you should adhere to your particular course and/or school requirements.

**Specific requirements for most reports submitted in the School for Marketing & International Business (SMIB)**

1. Answer the question

The most important requirement is to answer the question! Be sure to read your assignment question very carefully.

2. Structure your report effectively

Use this handbook to guide your structure.

The key parts of your reports will be:

- title page (follow the template→)
- executive summary
- table of contents
- body of the report
- references
- appendices.

---

**[Title of your report/project]**


[Name/Code of your course]

Lecturer: [Lecturer's Name]



**Submitted by:**

[Your name]

[Your student number]

Tutor: [Tutor's Name]

Tutorial Number: [#]

## 3. Give careful consideration to your page layout and presentation

Use:

- 12-point font

- either Times New Roman or Arial (or similar) consistently throughout the report,  including in tables and figures

- 2.5 centimetre (one inch) margins at the top, bottom, and both sides of the document

- 1.5 spacing between lines

- an additional line space between paragraphs, **or** indent the first line of each paragraph.

## 4. Reference in APA

Ensure you reference consistently in APA style. You should use in-text referencing for each citation (material that you have taken from other sources). This material will be either quotes or paraphrases. Include a reference list at the end of your report, again paying careful attention to APA style for different types of references. Your reference list will include the sources that showed up in your in-text referencing. It is not a list of everything you read, just of the material you actually included in your report.

## Appendix D:  An example of a finished report

This example report has been adapted from a model report in Guffey, M.E., Rhodes, K., Rogin, P. (2001). Business communication: Process and Product, 3rd Canadian Edition. Scarborough: Nelson Thomson Learning. Pp. 461-473.

While the content follows Guffey et al (2001), the formatting has been changed to match the style described in the VBS report writing guide, including APA referencing rather than MLA. Formatting has also been updated in line with current usage, and section numbering added. The commentary provided in side annotations are in the main taken from Guffey et al (2001), and further annotations can be found in the original.

## Memorandum

**DATE:**     19 January, 2010

**TO:**       Cheryl Bryant, Director
              Recycling Programme
              Office of Associated Students

**FROM:**     Alan Christopher, OAS Business Senator

**SUBJECT:**  Increasing participation in West Coast College's
              recycling programme

Here is the report you requested on 11 December 2009. It relates to the status of West Coast College's recycling programme. This report gives recommendations for increasing awareness and use of the recycling programme. It incorporates both primary and secondary research. The primary research focused on a survey of members of the West Coast College campus community.

Give purpose of the report

Although the campus recycling programme is progressing well, the information gathered shows that with more effort we should be able to increase participation and achieve our goal of setting an excellent example for both students and the local community. Recommendations for increasing campus participation in the programme include educating potential users about the programme and making recycling on campus easy.

Indicate future actions

I am grateful to my business communication class for helping me develop a questionnaire, for pilot testing it, and for distributing it to the campus community.  Their enthusiasm and support contributed greatly to the success of this OAS research project.

Acknowledge any assistance

Please telephone me if you would like additional information.  I would be happy to implement some of the recommendations in this report by developing promotional materials for the recycling campaign.

# Analysis of the West Coast College Campus Recycling Program

Presented to

Cheryl Bryant
Recycling Director
Office of Associated Students
West Coast College

Prepared by

Alan Christopher
Business Senator
Office of Associated Students

19 January, 2010

## Executive summary

### Purpose and method of this report

West Coast's recycling programme was created to fulfil the College's social responsibility as an educational institution as well as to meet the demand of legislation requiring individuals and organisations to recycle. The purposes of this report are to:

- determine the amount of awareness of the campus recycling programme
- recommend ways to increase participation in the programme.

We conducted a questionnaire survey to learn about the campus community's recycling habits and to assess participation in the current recycling programme. A total of 220 individuals responded to the survey. Since West Coast College's recycling programme includes only aluminium, glass, paper, and plastic, these were the only materials considered in this study.

### Findings and conclusions

Most survey respondents recognised the importance of recycling and stated that they recycle aluminium, glass, paper, and plastic on a regular basis either at home or work. However, most respondents displayed a low level of awareness of the on-campus programme. Many of the respondents were unfamiliar with the location of the bins around campus and, therefore, had not participated in the recycling programme. Other responses indicated that the bins were not conveniently located.

The results of this study show that more effort is needed to increase participation in the campus recycling programme.

### Recommendations for increasing recycling participation

Recommendations for increasing participation in the programme include:

- relocating the recycling bins for greater visibility
- developing incentive programmes to gain the participation of individuals and on-campus student groups
- training student volunteers to give on-campus presentations explaining the need for recycling and the benefits of using the recycling programme
- increasing advertising about the programme.

i

Tell purpose of the report and briefly describe the research

Give conclusion/s of report

Give report recommendations

**Table of Contents**

Use *leaders* to guide eye from heading to page number

27

# 1    Introduction

North American society is often criticised as being a "throw away" society, and perhaps that criticism is accurate (Gahan, 2008). We discard 11 to 14 billion tons of waste each year, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency. Of this sum, 180 million tons comes from households and businesses, areas where recycling efforts could make a difference (Hollusha, 2010). According to a survey conducted by Decima Research, 73 percent of North American companies have waste reduction programmes (Schneider, 2008). Although some progress has been made, there is still a problem. For example, the annual volume of discarded plastic packaging in North America is eight billion tons—enough to produce 118 million plastic park benches yearly (Joldine, 2009). Despite many recycling programmes and initiatives, most of our rubbish finds its way to landfill sites. With an ever-increasing volume of waste, estimates show that 80 percent of North America's landfills will be full by the year 2015 (de Blane, 2009).

To combat the growing waste disposal problem, some states and provinces are trying to pass legislation aimed at increasing recycling. Many North American communities have enacted regulations requiring residents to separate bottles, cans, and newspapers so that they may be recycled (Schneider, 1999). Other means considered to reduce waste include tax incentives, packaging mandates, and outright product bans (Hollusha, 2010). All levels of government are trying both voluntary and mandatory means of reducing rubbish sent to landfills.

Give context and general subject matter

Use APA referencing style

1

### 1.1 West Coast Recycling Programme

In order to do its part in reducing rubbish and to meet the requirements of legislation, West Coast College began operating a recycling programme one year ago. Aluminium cans, glass, office and computer paper, and plastic containers are currently being recycled through the programme. Recycling bins are located at various sites around campus, outside buildings, and in department and administrative offices to facilitate the collection of materials. The Office of Associated Students (OAS) oversees the operation of the programme. The programme relies on promotions, advertisements, and word of mouth to encourage its use by the campus community.

> Give background to issue/ problem

### 1.2 Purpose of this study

The OAS had projected higher levels of participation in the recycling programme than those achieved to date. Experts say that recycling programmes generally must operate at least a year before results become apparent (de Blanc, 2009). The OAS programme has been in operation one year, yet gains are disappointing. Therefore, the OAS authorised this study to determine the campus community's awareness and use of the programme. Recommendations for increasing participation in the campus recycling programme will be made to the OAS based on the results of this study.

> Describe the issue to be reported on
>
> State the specific questions the report answers

### 1.3 Scope of this study

This study investigates:
- potential participants' attitudes towards recycling in general
- participants' awareness of the campus recycling programme
- participants' willingness to recycle on campus
- the perceived convenience of the recycling bins.

Only aluminium, glass, paper, and plastic are considered in this study as they are the only materials being recycled on campus at this time.

The costs involved in the programme were not considered in this study as we did not consider them relevant. Steelman, Desmond, and Johnson (2008) state that a recycling programme generally does not begin to pay for itself during the first year. After the first year, the financial benefit is usually realised in reduced disposal costs (Steelman, Desmond, and Johnson 2008).

> Discuss the scope (or extent) of the investigation

**1.4    Sources and methods**

We consulted current business periodicals and newspapers for background information and to learn how other organisations are encouraging use of in-house recycling programmes. We used these findings to formulate a questionnaire on recycling habits. This questionnaire (shown in the appendix) was then used to survey administrators, faculty, staff, and students at West Coast College campus. In all, a sample of 220 individuals responded to the self-administered questionnaire. The composition of the sample closely resembled the makeup of the campus population. Figure 1 shows the percentage of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who participated in the survey.

Discuss how the study was conducted

*Figure 1. Composition of survey sample*



Faculty, 23%

Staff, 10%

Administrators, 7%

Students, 60%
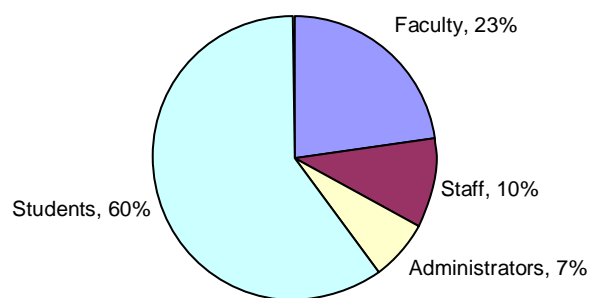
3

**Note:**
If you use figures or tables, be sure to introduce them in the text. Although it is not always possible, try to place them close to the spot where they are first mentioned.

## 2   Conclusions

Based on the findings of the recycling survey of members of the West Coast College campus community, we draw the following conclusions:

1. Most members of the campus community are already recycling at home or at work.

2. Over half of the respondents recycle aluminium and paper on a regular basis; most recycle glass and plastic to some degree.

3. Most of the surveyed individuals expressed a willingness to participate in a recycling programme. Many, however, seem unwilling to travel very far to participate; 42 percent would like more recycling bins to be located inside the cafeteria.

4. Awareness and use of the current campus recycling programme are low. Only a little over a third of the respondents knew of any recycling bin locations on campus, and only a fifth had actually used them.

5. Respondents considered the locations of the campus bins inconvenient. This perceived inconvenience was given as the principal reason for not participating in the campus recycling programme.

## 3    Recommendations

After considering the findings and conclusions of this study, we offer the following recommendations in an effort to improve the operations and success of the West Coast recycling programme:

1.    Increase on-campus awareness and visibility by designing an eye-catching logo for use in promotions.

2.    Enhance comprehension of recycling procedures by teaching users how to recycle. Use posters to explain the recycling programme and to inform users of recycling bin locations. Label each bin clearly as to what materials may be deposited.

3.    Add bins in several new locations, and particularly more in the food service and vending machine areas.

4.    Recruit student leaders to promote participation in the recycling programme. These students should give educational talks to classes and other campus groups.

5.    Develop an incentive programme for student organisations. Offer incentives for meeting OAS recycling goals. On-campus groups could compete in recycling drives designed to raise money for the group, the college, or a charity. Money from the proceeds of the recycling programme could be used to fund the incentive programme.

5

**Note:**
Report recommendations are most helpful to readers when they not only make suggestions to solve the original research problem but also describe specific actions to be taken. Notice that this report goes beyond merely listing ideas. Instead, it makes practical suggestions for ways to implement the recommendations.

## 4    Findings and discussion

The findings of the study will be presented in two categories:

- Recycling habits of the respondents
- Participation in the West Coast College recycling programme.

### 4.1    Recycling habits of respondents

A major finding of the survey reveals that most respondents are willing to recycle even when not required to do so. Data tabulation shows that 72 percent of the respondents live in an area where neither the city nor the region requires separation of rubbish. Yet 80 percent of these individuals indicated that they recycle aluminium on a regular basis. Although the percentages are somewhat smaller, many of the respondents also regularly recycle glass (46 percent) and plastic (45 percent). These results, summarised in Figure 2, clearly show that campus respondents are accustomed to recycling the four major materials targeted in the West Coast recycling programme.

*Figure 2. Respondents who regularly recycle at home or at work*

| Material | Percentages |
|----------|-------------|
| Aluminium | 80% |
| Paper | 55% |
| Glass | 46% |
| Plastic | 45% |

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of recycling the materials collected in the West Coast programme. Figure 3 shows that respondents felt aluminium was most important, although most also ranked the other materials (glass, paper, and plastic) as either "extremely important" or "somewhat important" to recycle. Respondents were also asked what materials they actually recycled most frequently, and aluminium again ranked first.

6

In this section you will present, interpret, discuss, and analyse findings.

Use tables and graphs where possible to present/ summarise findings

*Figure 3. Materials considered most important to recycle*
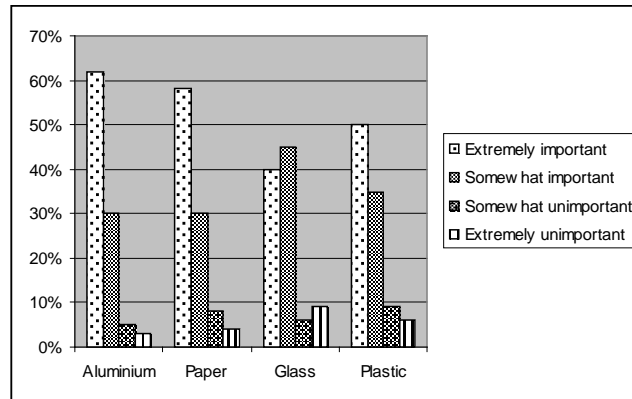


When asked how likely they would be to go out of their way to deposit an item in a recycling bin, 29 percent of the respondents said "very likely", and 55 percent said "somewhat likely". Thus, respondents showed willingness—at least on paper—to recycle even if it means making a special effort to locate a recycling bin.

## 4.2    Participation in recycling on campus

De Blanc (2009) gives factors important to any recycling programme. She states that:

- recycling centres must be in convenient locations
- participants must be aware of these locations
- participants must be trained to use recycling centres.

We incorporated de Blanc's factors in our survey and included questions assessing awareness and use of the current bins. The survey also investigated reasons for not participating in the programme as well as reasons for the perceived convenience of current bin locations.

Include theory in discussion of findings

4.2.1 Student awareness and the use of bins

Two of the most significant questions in the survey asked whether respondents were aware of the OAS recycling bins on campus and whether they had used the bins. Responses to both questions were disappointing, as Figure 4 illustrates.

*Figure 4. Awareness and use of recycling bins on campus*

| Location | Awareness of bins at this location | Use of bins at location |
|---|---|---|
| Cafeteria | 38% | 21% |
| Bookstore | 29% | 12% |
| Administration building | 28% | 12% |
| Computer Labs | 16% | 11% |
| Library | 15% | 7% |
| Student union | 9% | 5% |
| Classrooms | 8% | 6% |
| Department and Administrative offices | 6% | 3% |
| Athletic centre | 5% | 3% |
| Unaware of any bins; have not used any bins | 20% | 7% |

Figure 4 shows that only 38 percent of the respondents were aware of the bins located outside the cafeteria. Even fewer were aware of the bins outside the bookstore (29 percent) and outside the administration building (28 percent). Equally dissatisfying, only 21 percent of the respondents had used the most visible recycling bins outside the cafeteria.

Other recycling bin locations were even less familiar to the survey respondents and, of course, were little used. These responses plainly show that the majority of the respondents in the West Coast campus community have a low awareness of the recycling programme and an even lower record of participation.

Clearly interpret your findings so that your reader can see the basis for your conclusions and recommendations

8

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### 4.2.2 Reasons for not participating

Respondents offered several reasons for not participating in the campus recycling programme. Forty-five percent said that the bins were not convenient to use. Thirty percent said that they did not know where the bins were located. Another 25 percent said that they were not in the habit of recycling. Although many reasons for not participating were listed, the primary reason appears to be inconvenience of bin locations.

### 4.2.3 Location of recycling bins

When asked specifically how they would rate the location of the bins currently in use, only 13 percent of the respondents felt that the bins were extremely convenient. Another 36 percent rated the bins as somewhat convenient. Over half the respondents felt that the locations of the bins were either somewhat inconvenient or extremely inconvenient. Recycling bins are currently located outside nearly all the major campus rooms or buildings, but respondents clearly considered these locations inconvenient or inadequate.

In indicating where they would like recycling bins placed (see Figure 5), 42 percent of the respondents felt that the most convenient locations would be inside the cafeteria. Placing more recycling bins near the student union seemed most convenient to another 33 percent of those questioned, while 15 percent stated that they would like to see the bins placed near the vending machines. Ten percent of the individuals responding to the survey did not seem to think that the locations of bins would matter to them.

*Figure 5. Preference for placement of recycling bins*

| | |
|---|---|
| Inside the cafeteria | 42% |
| More in the student union | 33% |
| Near vending machines | 15% |
| Does not matter | 10% |

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magazine

journal

online
newspaper

author in an
edited book

printed
newspaper

book

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**Appendix**

West Coast College recycling programme survey

West Coast College recently implemented a recycling programme on campus.

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions so that we can make this programme as convenient as possible for you to use.

1. Please indicate which items you recycle on a regular basis at home or at work. (Tick *all* that apply.)
   ☐ Aluminium
   ☐ Glass
   ☐ Paper
   ☐ Plastic

2. Do you live in an area where the city / municipality requires separation of waste?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. How important is it to you to recycle each of the following:

|  | Extremely Important | Somewhat Important | Somewhat Unimportant | Extremely Unimportant |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aluminium |  |  |  |  |
| Glass |  |  |  |  |
| Paper |  |  |  |  |
| Plastic |  |  |  |  |

4. How likely would it be for you to go out of your way to put something in a recycling bin?

| Very Likely | Somewhat Likely | Somewhat Unlikely | Very Unlikely |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

5. Which of the following items do you recycle *most* often? (Choose *one* item only.)
   ☐ Aluminium
   ☐ Glass
   ☐ Paper
   ☐ Plastic
   ☐ Other

6. Listed below are locations of the recycling bins on campus. (Check *all* those of which you are aware.)

   ☐ Administration Building  ☐ Library
   ☐ Bookstore  ☐ Athletic centre
   ☐ Student union  ☐ Computer labs
   ☐ Department and administrative offices
   ☐ Cafeteria  ☐ I'm unaware of any of these recycling bins.

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Appendices can include questionnaires and other material used in assembling the report.

**Note:**
The appendix continues the report's page numbering.