Short report

1. Have you ever had to write a business report in your own language? What was it about?
2. What topics does your company or industry need to report on? Why?

Listen to the speakers and decide which of the following questions they are answering. There are more questions than speakers.

Not used Speaker 1 Speaker 2 Speaker 3

a. _____ What is the purpose of a report?

b. _____ Who are reports for?

c. _____ What should be in a report?

d. _____ What information should not go in a report?

Listen again to the speakers and complete the following sentences with 1-3 words that they say.

1. For a report to be useful, it must _____.
2. The first step is to identify _____ that you need to solve.
3. Having done that, you will need to _____ as much data as you can to provide answers.
4. In order to be _____, the report should help management make a decision about the best action to take.
5. Senior management do not usually _____to do the research themselves which is why the report is vital.
6. A report should always begin with _____ .
7. This will help anyone reading it quickly to know exactly what the report's _____ .
8. At the end, a report should offer _____ on the next course of action.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1A Read the brief report and complete it with the words in the box.

department	heads	issues	orders	policy
reasons	stock	systems	technology	updates

Introduction

There have been some problems recently due to poor communication so we need to have a new communication [1]_____ for the company. This report looks at [2]_____ for communication problems between departments and finally makes recommendations.

Findings

One of the key [3]_____ is that warehouse staff are unhappy with sales staff who take [4]_____ for goods which are out of stock. Last week we had a big order for fridge-freezers and there were none in the warehouse. It seems that the sales [5]_____ **had not checked** [6]_____ levels before accepting the order. The Sales Manager complained that no one **had updated** the stock records. Stock [7]_____ ought to happen automatically but they do not. It seems that staff expect the [8]_____ to do everything and will not talk to each other.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that department managers monitor [9]_____ more closely and make sure that any problems are reported immediately so everyone is aware of them. There should also be morning meetings for all department [10]_____ to exchange information.

2 Complete the table below with the words in the box.

aims	asked	found	key	looks	make	might
purpose	recommendations	recommended				
seems	should	thing				

Introduction
This report [1]_____ at reasons for the problems.
The [2]_____ of this report is to ...
The director has [3]_____ me to write this report to ...
This report [4]_____ to analyse the reasons why ...
Finally it will [5]_____ recommendations ...
Findings
One of the [6]_____ problems is that staff do not ...
The first [7]_____ we noticed was that ...
It was [8]_____ that staff were unhappy because ...
It [9]_____ that staff do not speak to each other.
Recommendations
It is therefore [10]_____ that ...
The managers [11]_____ have morning meetings to ...
Our [12]_____ are to ...
We [13]_____ therefore need to change the system.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1A Read the sentences from a report. Decide if they are part of the Introduction, Findings or Recommendations. Complete the table.

1. The director has asked me to write this report to try to improve our performance at conferences.
2. The managers should have three days off work to attend these courses. It is hoped these courses will be run off-site.
3. It seems that staff do not feel confident in this soft skill, either in English or their own language.
4. It is therefore recommended that we organise training courses in effective presentations and other communication skills. Our aims are to give the managers of the sales and marketing teams intensive courses as a priority, then train their staff.
5. This report looks at reasons for these problems and aims to analyse why we are underperforming.
6. One of the key problems is that staff do not have the communication skills needed. In fact, the first thing we noticed was that few of our staff give presentations at conferences.
7. Finally, it will make recommendations.
8. Recently, we have failed to make a good impression at these events compared to our competitors.
9. It was found that staff were not prepared to do them because they have had no training in public speaking.
10. We might therefore need to allocate extra budget for accommodation.

Introduction	Findings	Recommendations

B Put the sentences in Exercise 1A in the correct order.

[1]*I'm writing this report because* my boss wants to know how the staff feel about the changes that are going to take place next month. [2]*I'm going to talk about* what those changes are, how the staff will be affected, and how they feel.

[3]*A very big problem is* the staff have not been told exactly what the changes are. As a result, they are very worried and unhappy. [4]*I also discovered* that some staff are applying for other jobs. This means we would lose some very experienced staff. [5]*I think* that this has caused a really bad feeling in the company.

[6]*I think it's important to tell* staff exactly what is happening and ask them for any ideas they might have to help with the changes. [7]*Let's do this* very quickly to solve the problems.

Think of ways to improve the phrases in italics.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Functional language

Section	Function	Examples
Introduction	It states the purpose of the report.	The purpose of this report is to identify ways to reduce costs. The aim of the report is to communicate the main findings from our recent research trip.
Findings	A summary of key findings, e.g. results of experiments, research or surveys.	We found that less than half of those questioned would buy the product again. A small number of those interviewed disliked the material. The results of the research show that fresh vegetables contain more vitamins. We discovered that the majority of those tested preferred bottled water.
Recommendations	Bullet points or numbered lists may be used to highlight key information. For more information on bullet points and lists, see Instructions and warnings, in section 4 of this Writing bank.	The main recommendations are as follows: • It is recommended that all employees undergo safety training. • The kitchen area should be cleaned every day. • The teams need to identify solutions. • We might consider contacting suppliers to discuss possible price reductions.
Conclusion	It summarises the main message of the report.	In summary, the sales promotion was a success. The main conclusion is that objectives need to be clearly communicated to the teams. In conclusion, there will be major changes to company strategy.

Language and register

Sequencing	Firstly, the calculations were checked. Then the findings were compared with the same sales figures from the last financial year. After that, the data was put into the computer system. Finally, we looked at strategies which could improve the process.
Communicating findings	We discovered that the security system had not worked. One of the key issues is the location of the business. As a result, the team was able to improve the design. As a consequence, the wrong goods were delivered.
Personal or impersonal?	*We* can be used to indicate that more than one person was involved in gathering the information included in a report. It can also be used to deliver the information in the report in a more formal and less personal style. *I researched ways that new technology could improve communication.* *We looked into ways to improve customer experience in our stores.* Information can also be made more impersonal through the use of grammar. Compare: *I asked the sales team to prepare a report.* (Past Simple) *The sales team was asked to prepare a report.* (Past Simple passive)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

2 Read the situation below and think what recommendations you could make. Then write a report of about 160 words for the director.

Your company has signed a contract with a Brazilian company, Media Sales BR. You have completed an audit of your technical and sales teams to identify potential issues in working with the new partner. It is important that employees in these departments have the language skills required to work in teams with the Brazilian company. Their technical team don't speak English at all, though their sales team members are fluent.

The audit revealed that nobody in your technical team speaks Portuguese and only 70 percent of your overseas sales staff are fluent in English. You have three months before the contract starts.

- Introduce the report clearly, stating your reasons for writing it.
- State your findings clearly.
- Make realistic recommendations.

Look at the notes. Brainstorm some ideas for the report. Write a short report.

Requested by: HR Manager
Why: too many staff leaving after one year
Findings: salary not competitive, communication bad, too much work (add your own details)
Recommendations: use your own ideas

LIVEWORKSHEETS