

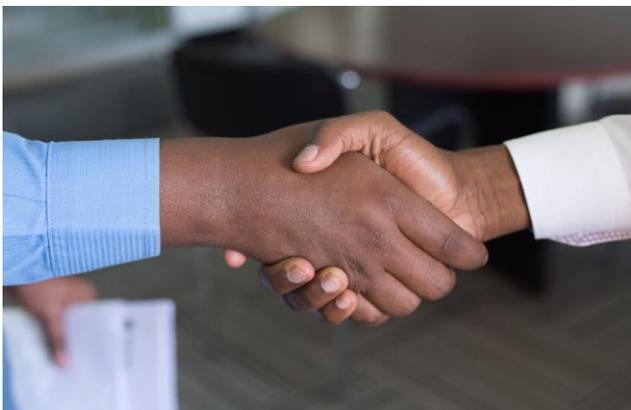
# BUSINESS REPORT

## Content

Business reports may vary depending on the topic, such as case study reports, financial or feasibility reports, risk management reports, and project reports. After establishing the intended audience for your report, you should consider the issue, organisation, scenario, or current situation, and collect relevant information to include in your report. You may be asked to evaluate the information and make recommendations, suggestions or create a plan based on your analysis. Use the assessment marking criteria as a checklist to ensure you address each element of the report.

## Structure

Business reports generally contain certain elements such as an introduction, body and conclusion. They often require an executive summary, which states the aim of the report, a description of any methods used, a summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations. There may also be a requirement for a title page which includes the title of the report, the student's name and the institutional affiliation (NPI). Some reports require a table of contents and appendices section with information that does not need be included in the body of the report but would be useful for the reader.



## Report Elements

Reports often include the following elements:

### Executive summary

- overall summary of the purpose of the report, its findings, conclusions and recommendations.

### Table of contents

- content list of what will be covered in the report.

### Introduction

- brief background of the focus of the report with relevant background information.
- a clear statement of the issue the report addresses and/or the aim and scope of the report.
- include the main points that will be covered in the main section of the report signposted for the reader.

### Main Body

- contains all the key aspects of the assessment criteria.
- elaborates on the issues or topic and provides an analysis of the investigation.
- cite all source material using APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition in-text referencing.

### Conclusion/recommendations

- summarise the main findings without adding any new information.
- give recommendations based on the findings.

### Reference List

- provide a list of the source material you used in your report following the APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition reference list format.

### Appendices

- provide further information that is too long or detailed to include in the main body of the report.

## Style

Reports may present information in paragraphs, bullet points and numbered lists. Check the instructions and marking criteria (and your educator) for specific requirements.

Bullet points and numbered lists should be used sparingly. A bullet point list needs to be introduced using part of a sentence with a colon (:) and written so that each point fits in grammatically with the introductory sentence.

Below is an example of bullet points. Notice that there is a lead in phrase, and each point starts with the same type of word (in this case, an “-ing word”) so that it fits in grammatically from the lead in

### Sample bullet point list

The study also considered a range of marketing and management issues that would need to be considered to ensure the success of the business. Accordingly, the following it is recommended that:

- the target customer base should be younger clients
- the focus should be on high quality as opposed to low costs services and products.
- products and services should take account of the multicultural composition of the area.

## Tables and Figures

Some information in a report might be best presented as a table or figure (graphs, charts, and diagrams). They need to be labelled with an identifier (e.g. Figure 1 or Table 1) and a title/caption.

Additionally, if you have used a table or figure from a source, you need to acknowledge the source below the graphic. For more on APA style of figures & tables, click [here](#).

The information in the table or figure needs to be discussed within the report, that is, you need to explain what it means in words and refer to the graphic being discussed (e.g. As shown in Figure 1, there was an increase in...).

## Writing Style

Reports are written in a formal tone. There are different types of writing for different sections within a report. For example:

- Use simple past tense to describe procedures and methods.
- Use the present tense to emphasise the currency of information when reviewing what is already known in the field.
- Use comparative and evaluative language when analysing and interpreting information.
- Use modal forms such as ‘may’, ‘might’, ‘tend to’, ‘suggests’ when speculating rather than describing known facts.

## Critical Thinking

When writing a report, critical thinking is necessary to meet the requirements of the assessment. Critical thinking is used in the process of understanding and interpreting the issue, in analysing and evaluating information, in the application of relevant theories to your research, and when formulating conclusions and giving recommendations. For more on critical thinking, click [here](#).

Asking the following questions can guide you when evaluating information:

- Are the claims being made supported by current evidence?
- Is the type of evidence the most suitable available?
- When analysing information, have you considered the ‘why’ and the ‘how’?
- Have you reflected on any biases or assumptions that may influence the direction of the report?
- Does the report evaluate different perspectives to make fair judgements and recommendations?

## Headings

Unlike essays, reports usually have headings that relate to your particular assessment. Headings give structure to your writing by telling the reader what content to expect as well as illustrating its relative position within a hierarchy.

If you have not been given specific headings to use in your report, you will need to create appropriate headings based on the elements in the marking criteria.

For more on APA style of figures & tables, click [here](#).



### Formatting headings according to APA Style

The APA Publication Manual gives guidelines for up to five levels of heading in a paper, although most report assignments will need only two or three levels.

1. The first level should be centered and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.
2. The second level should be left aligned and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.
3. The third level should be flush left, in bold and italics. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

The example on the following page shows font and indentation formatting for when three levels of headings are used.

## Example of APA Style formatting

Heading level 1 should be centered and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

### Executive Summary

Put a first line indentation for all paragraphs.

Stylish is a hairdressing business that currently owns and operates two hairdressing salons in inner Melbourne. The study investigated whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business. The study consisted of an analysis of both the Mega and Task environments, and was based on information collected from a variety of sources: industry research reports, local government reports, and census data. The conclusion drawn from the analysis is that in the present environment the company would benefit from an expansion of its outlets. A number of recommendations are made concerning the establishing of the new proposed operation including, the need to focus on high quality as opposed to low costs services, and to target the younger, male customer base.

Heading level 2 should be left aligned and in bold. Each main word should start with a capital letter.

### Findings

When citing sources of three or more authors, use: et al.

The viability of establishing a new salon was considered in relation to two broad areas the mega environment and the task environment (Bartol et al. 2008). Each of these areas is discussed below.

Heading level 3 should be left aligned, in bold and italicised.

#### 2.1 *Mega Environment*

The mega environment refers to the larger external environment in which an organisation operates, that is to say, broad societal conditions and trends. Significantly, the elements of the mega environment are ones that an organisation has little or no influence over. The mega environment can be divided into five main components: a) economic; b) legal/political; c) technological; d) socio-cultural/ demographic; and e) international/global (Bartol et al. 2008). The relevance of each of these areas is discussed in relation to Stylish.

In-text citation for direct quotes need double quotation marks and a page or paragraph number.

##### 2.1.1 *Economic element*

The economic element refers to “systems of producing, distributing and consuming wealth” (Bartol et al. 2008, p. 72.). In considering the economic factors relating to the proposed business, it is not possible to overlook the impact of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC), and its continuing aftermath.

When using abbreviations for terms that are long, write the full term and abbreviation in parenthesis. Use the abbreviation only from then on.

Source: Adapted from [https://www.swinburne.edu.au/content/dam/media/docs/FBL-assignment-resource-Sample\\_Text\\_2\\_Business\\_Report\\_the\\_Stylish\\_Report.pdf](https://www.swinburne.edu.au/content/dam/media/docs/FBL-assignment-resource-Sample_Text_2_Business_Report_the_Stylish_Report.pdf)