

Worksheet 8: A formal report

1 Discuss in groups. Imagine a company wanted reports on the following items. Which reports would need to be very formal? Which could be less formal?

- 1 A report on an overseas trade visit
- 2 A report on the board of director's annual meeting
- 3 A report on a visit to an existing client
- 4 A report on bad behaviour by a member of staff
- 5 A report for the head of administration on stationery costs
- 6 A report on staff plans to introduce after-work sports activities

2 Read five extracts (A–E) from different parts of a very formal report. Match the extracts to the headings (1–4) taken from the report.

- 1 Introduction ____
- 2 Findings ____, ____
- 3 Conclusions ____
- 4 Recommendations ____

Unsurprisingly, the sales and marketing departments reported the highest travel costs per year within the company. Over 70% of their budget is currently spent on travel. Following interviews with heads of these two departments, it was concluded that video conferencing equipment could significantly reduce travel expenditure, not to mention the environmental impact. **A**

I recommend purchasing video conferencing equipment costing £30,000, with two years' guaranteed servicing and support. On approval of this by the board, I also propose that managers should prepare detailed plans on how they will integrate the equipment into the communication needs of their department. **B**

One supplier said that video conference equipment capable of fulfilling our needs would cost in the region of between £15,000 and £30,000. Whilst this initial cost is high, the same supplier also claimed that costs are recouped within twelve months of purchase. **C**

The aim of this report is to assess ways in which the company's travel budget can be reduced in the next financial year. It was requested as a result of a discussion at the most recent management board meeting. The information is based upon data which was provided by heads of department and accounts. **D**

In summary, the following points should be noted. **E**

- Video conferencing equipment is expected to reduce travel costs by somewhere in the region of 30%.
- Initial training is needed to operate the equipment, so time will need to be allocated for staff training.

3 Find useful expressions in the report to complete this list.

The purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to look at ...

1 _____

Who asked for the report

It was commissioned by ...

2 _____

Concluding

In conclusion, this report notes that ... ,

3 _____

Making recommendations

4 _____

5 _____

4 Read these direct speech sentences, then look back at the report in Exercise 2 to find who said each one. Underline the matching information in the extracts.

- 1 'We think it'll save significant amounts of money.' _____
- 2 'We should purchase video conference equipment costing £30,000 with two years' guaranteed servicing and support.'
- 3 'Managers need to write reports on how they'll integrate the equipment.'

- 4 'It'll cost somewhere between fifteen to twenty thousand pounds.'

- 5 'You'll get that money back within a year.' _____
- 6 'Staff will need training with the new equipment.' _____

5 Work in pairs. Look at the extracts again and underline the passive verbs. For each one, discuss these questions.

- 1 Is the agent (the person who did the action) known or unknown?
- 2 Why do you think the writer uses the passive instead of the active form?

6 The head of your company has asked you to write a report on ways to reduce spending in your department without losing productivity. Write a one-page report with the following headings: *Introduction, Findings, Conclusion* and/or *Recommendations*. You can either invent or research information for the section on *Findings*, including interviews with some people in your department about ways to reduce spending.

I CAN

write a formal report ☐

use expressions for introducing different parts of a formal report ☐

use formal passive reporting verbs ☐