

Most reports have a basic template which is easy to follow. You might want to compare this to reports you have been sent in your company, to see if there are any differences.

REPORT TITLE

PREPARED BY (your name and role) (date)

PURPOSE / SCOPE

A sentence or two summarising what the report is for. If you are finding this difficult, ask a colleague to ask you – what is the report for? If you can answer in less than 4 sentences, that's what you write.

CONTENTS

Reports with more than 5 pages need a contents page. Put the page numbers in a 'footer' which you will find on the 'insert' tab of your tool bar in MS Word.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reports with more than 5 pages need an executive summary. If your brief description above was more than 4 sentences, you can put it here. A good tip is to write this last.

CONTENT

- Try to follow the same format for each section. For example: graph, comments, action points.
- Break up the text with diagrams and graphs wherever you can.
- Be consistent with titles – always use the same size and emboldened format for titles of the same ilk, downsize for smaller titles etc.
- Use bullet points for lists and summaries wherever possible.
- Give sequences or processes numbers or arrows (try 'smart art' in Windows 7, it's great).

CONCLUSION

If your report has costs attached, it's a great idea to close with a cost summary.

You may want to close with an action point summary, perhaps in a table if different people / teams have different action points.