B1 & B2 Writing Reports and Articles

Report writing

You write a report to list events that have occurred. When writing a report you use a formal writing style. This is because most reports are written in a business setting.

It is important that a report is well-structured so information is easy to find. Use subheadings (tussenkoppen) so the reader can easily trace the different parts of the report.

Structure of a report:

- (Summary)
- Introduction
- Body
- Personal opinion or advice
- (Summary)

Introduction: in the introduction you state what the report is about, why it is written, and for whom.

Body: in the body of the report you write down what happened. Sometimes it is useful to use bullet points to do so. Make sure to use linking words (see list of linking words on the Wiki).

Personal opinion or advice: sometimes it is necessary to add your personal opinion or advice. You write this in the conclusion part of the report.

Summary: A report contains a short summary of the total content, either at the start or at the end of the report.

Article writing

Readers
An article is like a direct conversation with the reader. Who are your readers? What are they interested in? Speak to that reader and engage their interest right from the first sentence.

Planning
Spend 5 minutes brainstorming ideas. Brainstorm about the topic and outline.
What's your article going to be about? Outline three or four most important ideas you want to convey.

E.g.
Topic: Technology changed our working lives

1. *Sub topic 1:* Technology changed <u>where</u> we work
   - *Support:* work while travelling & work from home

2. *Sub topic 2:* Technology changed <u>how</u> we work
   - *Support:* multitasking & work more individually

3. *Sub topic 3:* Technology changed <u>when</u> we work
   - *Support:* flexible work schedules & work invading private life

Use subheadings to break up the text and make clear paragraphs. Think what your subheadings might be. Write in a semi-informal style, like having a conversation with the reader. And make sure there is organisation to your ideas. The planning stage is vital for this.

Title:
Attract your reader's attention. If you're anywhere on the internet these days, you'll be bombarded with articles with headlines that pull the reader in. It's called "click baiting" and all the writer is trying to do is make you open the page to read their article. What's your "click bait"? For some reason people like to read lists. Headlines like 'Five ways in which technology changed your working life' stir curiousity.

Introduction: This is your opportunity to hook the reader's interest in the very first sentence, which can be an interesting fact, a quotation, or a rhetorical question, for instance.

Body: Once you've written the introduction, it's time to develop the meat of your article in three or four paragraphs. Each should contain a single main idea, following the outline you prepared earlier. Use two or three sentences to support the main idea, citing specific examples. For an article to work, it has to be engaging enough to read all the way through. Remember how bored the examiner must be after reading fifty exam papers. Make it easier for them to get a good impression about your writing by entertaining them. Add humour, real life or made up examples, or make up quotes.

Ending the article:

Give the reader something to think about, perhaps by asking them another question or making a prediction. Often, the best endings link back to the starting point in some way. E.g.

- So, how has technology changed your working life?
- Technology may have changed our working lives, however our need to work in order to lead happy and productive lives will never change.

Writing Tips

1. *Use quotes*
   You can even make them up:
   - Einstein once said: "working from home is a blessing"

2. *Use a few questions*
   - Have you ever....?
   - What would it be like if.....?

3. *Use short, active sentences*
- Passive: The three vicious dogs were being walked by an old man
- Active: The old man walked the three vicious dogs.

4. *Use a semi-informal style*
   ~~to utilise~~ - to use
   ~~to facilitate~~ - to make possible

5. *Try to avoid using negatives.*
- For example: "I don't think it wouldn't work if you do it like this."
- Better is: "I think it will work if you do it like this."

6. *One topic per paragraph*