

1. Different types of writing at university

In your studies at Swinburne, you will be asked to produce a range of different assignment types. The main types (or 'genres') include: essays, reports, book/article reviews, literature reviews.

The following table sets out some of the differences between these genres. In this tutorial we will focus on the REPORT.

Genres	Description	Conventional Structure	Research base	Format and style
Essay	An extended task that usually requires you to present an argument in response to a question or issue	Introduction Body* Conclusion References *Body – students need to develop the structure of the body, based on the particular question they are dealing with and the argument they wish to present.	Based on wide-reading of books, journal articles etc. around the topic	Formal academic style Personal pronouns ('I') sometimes permitted Paragraphing very important to indicate essay structure Subheadings may be used, but not essential Extensive use of citations
Report	A task that usually requires you to investigate a situation, problem etc. Often involves making recommendations for some action to be taken	Executive summary Introduction Method Findings Conclusions Recommendations References The structure may vary depending on the type of report	Based on background reading on the topic; also often involves collecting/ analysing primary material (eg. interviews, data etc)	Formal academic style No use of personal pronouns ('I') Subheadings with numbered sections essential (eg. 1, 1.1 etc.) Concise, 'to the point' style Some use of citations
Book / article review	A task that requires you to summarise the main content of an article, book, website etc, and then provide an evaluation of this content	Introduction Summary of text Evaluation of text Conclusion	Usually based on the close reading of a single text – but can also include reference to other related readings	Formal academic style Personal pronouns ('I') usually permitted Paragraphing important to indicate review structure
Literature review	A task requiring the collecting, summarising, and evaluation of a range of texts around a particular topic	Introduction Theme 1 Theme 2 Theme 3 etc. Conclusion References	Based on wide and critical reading of state of the art journal articles, books etc.	Formal academic style Personal pronouns ('I') sometimes permitted Subheadings used to structure different themes of review High use of citations

Table 1: The more common genres of university study

In everyday business practices, reports can be given in oral and written formats, or they can be given in a combination of both. Reports can also be of different types.

In this tutorial we will focus on the business style report as this is a common type of report you will encounter in your studies.

This tutorial will cover the following topics:

1. Identifying the purposes of reports
2. Structuring reports
 - 2.1 Writing introductions
 - 2.2 Analysis/ findings sections
 - 2.3 Writing conclusions
 - 2.4 Recommendation sections
 - 2.5 The Executive Summary
3. Incorporating sources into your work
4. Using tables and figures
5. Using formal written style

2. The purpose of a report

Most business reports are practical documents. They are usually concerned with investigating an existing situation in an organisation with an aim to providing a basis for some future action. In this way they are an important way in which change and development is driven within organisations.

Many, though not all, reports are concerned with the following basic purposes:

- Solving a problem (e.g. *solving problems of low productivity in an organisation*)
- Improving a situation or practice (e.g. *improving recruitment methods in an organisation*)
- Innovating or creating something new (e.g. *developing a new product line in a company*)

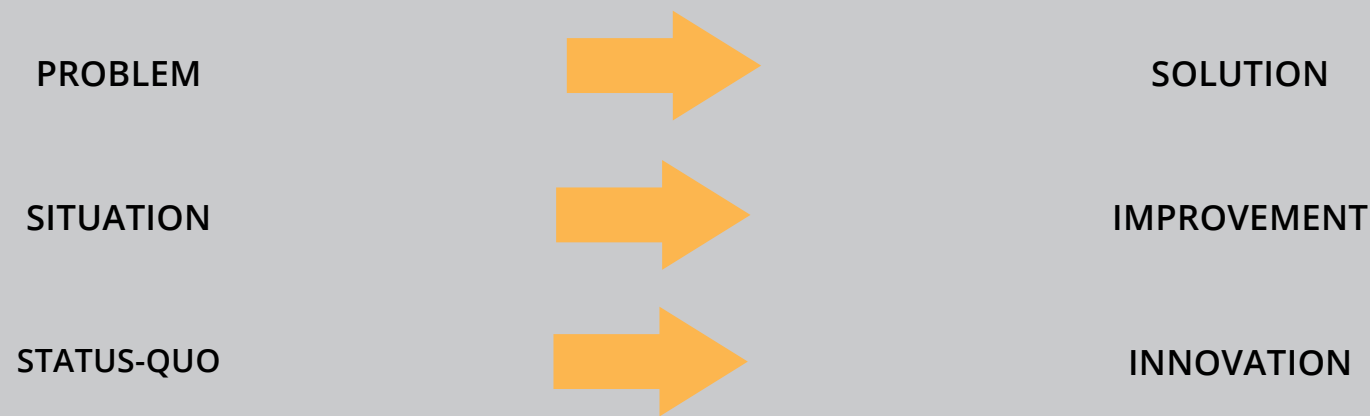


Fig. 1: The basic purposes of reports

ACTIVITY 1:

Here are some report assignments from management and business subjects. Read each carefully. Try to identify the **basic purpose** of the report. Is it:

- to solve a problem
 - to improve/develop a situation or practice
 - to innovate/create something new?
- a) Recently, General Engineering Australia has suffered from deteriorating employee relations resulting in high labour turnover, decreased productivity and high rates of absenteeism. Write a report identifying the main causes of these poor employee relations; and provide recommendations that could be implemented to increase productivity and retain skilled workers.
 - b) Provide an overview of existing Academic Language and Learning support for students at Swinburne University. Make recommendations for improving support services for 2015.
 - c) Design a 'non-functioning' prototype of a product package. You are required to write a report outlining how your design conforms to the principles of design for sustainability studied in this unit. You should also state the principles used and how they are demonstrated in your product package.

See page 9 for answers

ACTIVITY 2:

Read the following report topic *quickly* and answer the questions below:

Mary and Tran are the owners and operators of a hairdressing business, *Stylish*, in inner Melbourne, specialising in 'high end' quality, haircuts. The owners are considering opening a new salon in Hawthorn.



Prepare a business report for the owners investigating whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business. Your report should include analysis of both the Mega and Task environments as outlined in this unit and in the textbook. You will also need to undertake additional research using a variety of sources (eg. hairdressing industry reports, the Yellow Pages, relevant government regulations and local census data).

Length: 2,500-3,000 words

Format: Report format

Due Date: Week 6 tutorial

The assignment must be presented in report format. Ensure you use the recommended readings for Assignment 2 and consult the Learning Materials for additional information about the structure of a written report.

Questions

- a) What is the suggested word length?
- b) Who is the report for?
- c) What is the purpose of this business report?
- d) What information sources do you need to use for the assignment?

See page 10 for answers

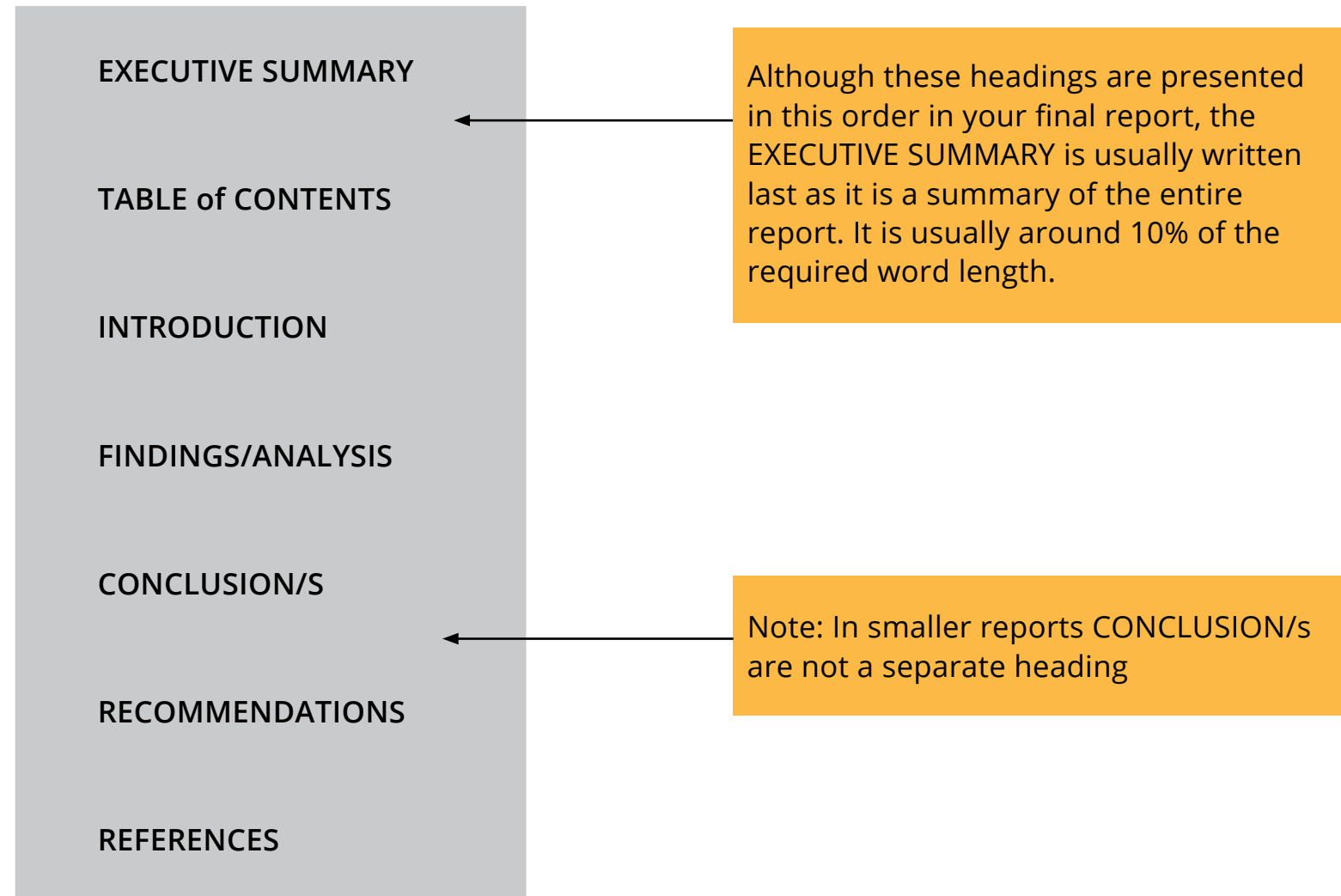
Often, the assignment topic itself will give you clear guidelines about what you are required to do.

3. The structure of a report

In basic terms, reports are organised around two elements:

- Your **ANALYSIS** of the situation you are investigating
- Some proposed **ACTIONS** (or **RECOMMENDATIONS**) that arise from your analysis

Drawing on these two elements, reports are typically structured around the following headings:

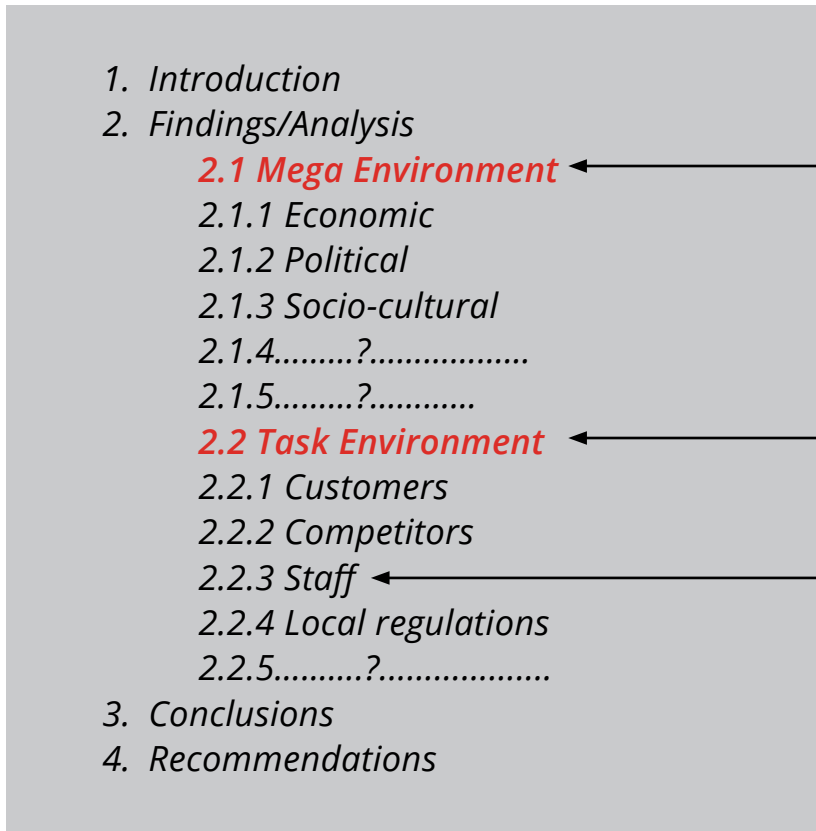


Within this broad structure, you will need to organise your material under a variety of headings and subheadings. One way to do this is to work closely with the assignment instructions, and to map out a provisional plan for your report.

Let's look at the assignment topic for *Stylish* again:

Colin Coif and Pamela Perm are the owners and operators of a hairdressing business, Stylish, in inner Melbourne, specialising in 'high end' quality haircuts. The owners are considering opening a new salon in Hawthorn. Prepare a business report for the owners investigating whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business. Your report should include analysis of both the Mega and Task environments as outlined in this unit and the textbook. You will also need to undertake additional research using a variety of sources (eg. hairdressing industry reports, the Yellow Pages, relevant government regulations and local census data).

Your provisional plan might look like this:



Tip: Use the question to help you map out the areas you are required to analyse under headings and sub-headings.

Note: Numbering headings and sub-headings allows you to show the reader how each section is related.

We will now consider the introduction, findings/analysis, conclusions and recommendations sections of a report.

3.1 Introductions

The introduction of a report normally includes:

1. the background to the issue and why it is important now
2. the aim/s (what you set out to do)
3. the scope (what is covered, and not covered in the report)
4. the method (how you did it/what information you used)
5. an outline of the report (how you have organised the information)

Note: The introduction is usually around 10% of the required word length.

ACTIVITY 3:

Can you identify these five areas (background; aim/s; scope; method and outline in this introduction to the *Stylish* report?

1. Introduction

Stylish is a hairdressing business that currently owns and operates two hairdressing salons in inner Melbourne: Carlton and South Melbourne. The owners of the business (hereon the client) are interested in expanding their operations, and have identified the Hawthorn area as a possible location for the establishing of a third salon.

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary information to the client about: i) the overall viability of establishing a salon in the Hawthorn area; and ii) key management and marketing issues that need to be considered in ensuring the success and profitability of any proposed new outlet. Note that the study considers the viability of the business in broad management and marketing terms only; it does not provide a comprehensive financial analysis of the proposed expansion.

In the investigation of these issues, two analytical concepts were used, namely Mega Environment and Task Environment. The Mega Environment is concerned with the external environment in which a business operates; the Task Environment considers conditions that a business faces in its immediate environment (Bartol et al. 2008, p.72). Data for the study came from a range of sources related to both these environments including: industry research reports, local government reports, and census data.

The report is divided into two main sections: a Findings section, which presents information about both environments as they relate to Stylish; and a Recommendations section which provides specific suggestions for the running of the proposed business.

See page 10 for answers

3.2 Analysis/Findings sections

The findings/analysis section includes:

1. what you have found out (the information or data you have collected in conducting your research).
2. what this information means in terms of the purpose of the report.

Note: The findings/analysis section is sometimes called the body as it is usually the longest section, containing detailed discussion and analysis of your research.

To analyse the information or data you have collected for the report, you usually need some kind of **analytical framework**. This framework allows you to consider your information in a logical and systematic way.

Reports can use a range of analytical frameworks. One such framework for example is **SWOT** analysis. This allows you to identify **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats**, and is often used for analysis in business reports.

In the example we have been looking at, the report for *Stylish*, the analytical frameworks you need to use are the **Mega environment** and the **Task environment**.

The first step then, is to define exactly what these terms mean and to reference the sources of the definitions. Here's an example of some notes a student wrote on the Mega environment:

Mega environment (Bartol et al 2011 p.72)

- larger external environment that an organisation operates in
- five main components: i) economic; ii) legal/political; iii) technological; iv) socio-cultural/demographic; and v) international

Source

Bartol, K, Tein, M, Mathews, G, Sharma, B & Scott-Ladd, B 2011, Management A pacific rim focus, 6th edn, McGraw-Hill, Australia.

Tip: Record full bibliographic details as you take notes: author/s, year, title, publisher, place etc. Also include page number details for definitions or direct quotations.

After you have collected the information you need, you also need to analyse these findings in terms of the purpose of the report.

ACTIVITY 4:

In the following examples based on the *Stylish* assignment, which seems to you to be more 'analytical' in its approach?

- a) The sociocultural/demographic element refers to the "attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, behaviours and associated demographic trends characteristic of a given geographic area" (Bartol et al. 2008, p. 73). Victoria is currently experiencing high population growth, lead only by NSW. While population growth is high in the state, the rate of growth in the hair and beauty industry in Victoria is relatively low (see Table 2). For example, between 2003 and 2007, Victoria's rate of growth in this industry was 1.9% compared to Queensland's growth rate of 5.3%, but Victoria's volatility rate was lower, at 37.7% compared to Queensland's at 42.5% (Hair Industry Report, 2010)
- b) The sociocultural/demographic element refers to the "attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, behaviours and associated demographic trends characteristic of a given geographic area" (Bartol et al. 2008, p. 73). Victoria is currently experiencing high population growth, lead only by NSW. While population growth is high in the state, the rate of growth in the hair and beauty industry in Victoria is relatively low as is volatility in the industry (see Table 2). These data suggest that investment in the industry in Victoria is generally a sound proposition.

See page 11 for answers

3.3 Conclusion sections

Now, let's consider the conclusion/s section of a report.

The conclusion/s section of a report usually:

- 1. includes a summary of your findings and analysis
- 2. contains no new information
- 3. links back to the purpose of the report

In short reports, the conclusions section may be included in the findings/analysis section of the report.

Just as the introduction included the purpose of the report, the conclusion too, links back by briefly stating your response to this purpose.

Let's return for a moment to the *Stylish* assignment:

Colin Coif and Pamela Perm are the owners and operators of a hairdressing business, Stylish, in inner Melbourne, specialising in 'high end' quality haircuts. The owners are considering opening a new salon in Hawthorn. Prepare a business report for the owners investigating whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business.

Note: So, the purpose of this report was to investigate whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area would be a viable business option.

Here is an example of a conclusion that a student wrote for the *Stylish* report:

The main question considered in this study was whether the establishing of a hairdressing salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the client. Based on the preceding analysis of both the mega and task environments, the conclusion drawn is that such an expansion of the business is likely to be a sound investment.

Note: This conclusion links back to the purpose of the report and follows on logically from the analysis of the findings.

3.4 Recommendation sections

Now, let's consider the recommendations section. Recommendations:

- suggest possible actions in the future
- suggest who, when and how these recommendations are to be implemented
- can use bullet lists to present these recommendations concisely

Here is an example of a recommendation that a student wrote for the *Stylish* report:

The target customer base should be younger clients (20-30 age segment), with some emphasis on products and services for young males.

Note: Recommendations often use 'should' to suggest future actions

Like the conclusions to a report, it is important that the recommendations follow on logically from the study's findings; that is to say, you will already have provided in the findings the justification (or rationale) for what you are recommending.

ACTIVITY 5:

Thinking about the recommendation above (i.e. the suggestion for *Stylish* to focus on a younger customer base, including young males), which one of the following two paragraphs from the findings section provides a rationale for this recommendation?

- a) A feature of the potential customer base is the relative affluence of the Hawthorn area. This has implications for pricing strategies. IBIS (2011, p.13) notes that the hairdressing industry operates in an environment of "significant price competition", though, suggests that this is often based on a misconception "that price is the deciding factor for clients".
- b) A significant trend in this younger inner urban demographic is the increasing interest shown by young men in grooming and appearance, sometimes associated with the so-called 'metrosexual' lifestyle (IBIS World Report 2011, p. 9). Such a trend has seen the decline of demand for traditional barbershop services, and dominance in inner urban areas of the unisex salon. While the hairdressing and beauty market continues to be dominated by the female customer base, major opportunities exist to expand product and service offerings for males.

See page 11 for answers

3.5 The Executive Summary

The final section of a report we will consider here is the Executive Summary. Although it is usually written last, the Executive summary comes at the beginning of a report, following the title page and before the Table of Contents. It should normally provide the following information:

- 1. The background to the study
- 2. The purpose or aim of the study
- 3. The methods used (eg. the analytical framework, the sources of data used etc)
- 4. The main conclusions
- 5. Recommendations

Note: The Executive Summary is not usually a numbered heading and is around 10% of the entire word length of the report.

ACTIVITY 6:

Can you identify these 5 areas (background; purpose/aim; methods; conclusion/s and recommendations) in this Executive Summary from the Stylish report?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 nature of the business including the need for a focus on targeting the younger, male population.

See page 11 for answers

4. Incorporating sources into your work

In the previous section, we looked at an example of some notes a student wrote on the Mega environment. The notes included where the student had found this information:

Mega environment (Bartol et al 2011 p.72)

- larger external environment that an organisation operates in
- five main components: i) economic; ii) legal/political; iii) technological; iv) socio-cultural/demographic; and v) international

Source

Bartol, K, Tein, M, Mathews, G, Sharma, B & Scott-Ladd, B 2011, Management A pacific rim focus, 6th edn, McGraw-Hill, Australia.

In this section, we will look in more detail at how you can incorporate or use these sources in your writing. This involves describing the information you found and acknowledging the sources of that information.

Here's an example of how the student used their notes on the mega environment in their writing.

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: i) economic; ii) legal or political; iii) technological; iv) socio-cultural or demographic; and v) international or global (Bartol et al, 2011, p.72). The relevance of each of these areas is discussed in relation to Stylish.

Note: The student has acknowledged the source of this information (*in-text referencing*) including author/s; year and page number. You will also need to record the full bibliographic details of all the sources cited or used in the report and include them in a reference list at the end of the report. This list is given the heading *References*.

Here's another example from the assignment, this time, incorporating a direct quotation:

The economic element refers to "systems of producing, distributing and consuming wealth" (Bartol et al. 2008, p.73).

Some of the references you use in your report will be from academic sources such as textbooks and research articles. These sources, which have been written for a specific academic purpose, are called secondary sources (e.g. Bartol et al. 2008).

In your report writing you will also often use a variety of primary sources – e.g. company reports, industry reports, census data etc. These sources will form the raw data of your investigations. The conventions for referencing this material are not always quite so straightforward. It is important however, that you provide enough information about the source to enable a reader to track down the material if they wish to.

ACTIVITY 7:

Study the following items from the list of references from the *Stylish* report. Which are secondary sources? Which are primary sources?

- a) Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011, Household income and income distribution , viewed 10 September 2011, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6523.0>
- b) Baltzan, P & Phillips, A 2010, Business Driven Technology,4th edn, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- c) Bartol, K, Tein, M, Matthews, G, Sharma, B & Scott-Ladd, B 2011, Management A pacific rim focus, 6th edn, McGraw-Hill, Australia.
- d) Community profile: Hawthorn: What is our individual income? 2011,Profile id, viewed 10 September 2011, <http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=249&pg=124&gid=140&type=enum>

See page 12 for answers

5. Tables and Figures

Reports often use tables, figures and/or graphs to support findings and analysis.

If you incorporate a table directly into your findings and analysis section, you need to refer to it in your text (eg, *as indicated in Table 1 or see Table 1*). You also need to give your table a title (eg. *Revenue Outlook in the Hairdressing Industry*) and use an in-text reference or citation (eg. *IBIS, 2011*) to acknowledge the source of the information.

While recent conditions in the industry have been poor, the outlook over the period 2012 – 2015 is expected to be more positive with a projected average annual rate of growth of 3.6%, as indicated in Table 1 (IBIS, 2011). These economic factors suggest that investment in the hairdressing industry, at least in the foreseeable future, is likely to be worthwhile.

Industry Outlook		
	Revenue AUD Million	Growth %
2009	3,292.0	-2.2
2010	3,180.0	-3.4
2011	3,291.0	3.5
2012	3,430.0	4.2
2013	3,556.0	3.7
2014	3,670.0	3.3

Table 1: Revenue Outlook in the Hairdressing Industry (IBIS, 2011)

Note: This example incorporates the table directly into the findings/analysis section. It also includes a title and in-text referencing.

6. Written style

Note that an IMPERSONAL style is used in report writing. You tend not to make reference to yourself even though you are the author of the report.

DON'T write: *I have made a number of recommendations* (ACTIVE VOICE)

WRITE: *A number of recommendations have been made* (PASSIVE VOICE)

An alternative way to make the report more impersonal is to avoid mentioning yourself and refer to the study/report you have conducted:

DON'T write: *I consider the viability of the business in broad management and marketing terms*

WRITE: *The study considers the viability of the business in broad management and marketing terms*

Another feature of report style is the use of DOT POINTS. These are a way of conveying information in a concise and ordered way. A few tips:

- Do not overuse dot points – while they are good way of summarising information, nobody likes to read a report that uses them in excess. They will interrupt the flow of your ideas, and make your report less interesting to read.
- Use parallel structure when presenting a dot-point list - that is to say, all items in your list should be in the same grammatical form:

DON'T write:

The following recommendations are made:

- *the target customer base should be younger clients* **Full sentence**
- *focus on high quality services and products* **Imperative sentence**
- *organise marketing strategies around social media.* **Imperative sentence**

WRITE:

The following recommendations are made:

- *the target customer base should be younger clients* **Full sentence**
- *the focus should be on high quality services and products* **Full sentence**
- *marketing strategies should be organised around social media.* **Full sentence**

ACTIVITY 8:

IMPERSONAL STYLE

Rewrite the following sentences using a more impersonal style.

1. In the investigation of these issues, I used two analytical concepts, namely Mega Environment and Task Environment.
2. I have divided the report into two main sections: a findings section, and a recommendations section

DOT-POINTS

Read the following list of recommendations. The last item is not parallel with the preceding three. Rewrite it so that it is in a consistent parallel form:

The following recommendations are made:

- *the target customer base should be younger clients*
- *the focus should be on high quality services and products*
- *marketing strategies should be organised around social media*
- *provide a clear career pathway for staff*

See page 12 for answers

7. A final note on interpreting assignment topics

Sometimes you will find topics that are difficult to interpret, and you are left wondering what it is exactly you need to do. In these situations, it is best not to try to guess, and hope you are heading in the right direction.

If you are in doubt, always consult your lecturer or tutor to get his/her advice, and to find out if you are on track. You can also consult the staff of the university's language and academic skills unit, who can help you with a range of study and writing issues.

8. A SAMPLE report

To find out how all the above looks in practice, read the Sample Business Report:

http://www.swinburne.edu.au/student/study-help/las/resources/Sample_Text_2_Business_Report_the_Stylish_Report.pdf

9. Activity answers

ACTIVITY 1 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- a) Recently, General Engineering Australia has suffered from deteriorating employee relations resulting in high labour turnover, decreased productivity and high rates of absenteeism. Write a report identifying the main causes of poor employee relations; and provide recommendations that could be implemented to increase productivity and retain skilled workers.

PROBLEM



SOLUTION

In this assignment, you need to look at PROBLEMS in the organisation, and suggest ways to SOLVE them.

- b) Provide an overview of existing Academic Language and Learning support for students at Swinburne University. Make recommendations for improving support services for 2013.

SITUATION



IMPROVEMENT/S

In this assignment, you need to look at the current SITUATION in an organisation, and suggest ways to IMPROVE the service provided.

- c) Design a 'non-functioning' prototype of a product package. You are required to write a report outlining how your design conforms to the principles of design for sustainability studied in this unit. You should also state the principles used and how they are demonstrated in your product package.

SITUATION



IMPROVEMENT/S

In this assignment, you need to use certain design principles to devise a NEW product package.

Return to Activity 1.

ACTIVITY 2 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Read the following report topic *quickly* and answer the questions below:

Colin Coif and Pamela Perm are the owners and operators of a hairdressing business, *Stylish*, in inner Melbourne, specialising in 'high end' quality, haircuts. The owners are considering opening a new salon in Hawthorn. Prepare a business report for the owners investigating whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business. Your report should include analysis of both the Mega and Task environments as outlined in this unit and in the textbook. You will also need to undertake additional research using a variety of sources (eg. hairdressing industry reports, the Yellow Pages, relevant government regulations and local census data).

Length: 2,500-3,000 words

Format: Report format

Due Date: Week 6 tutorial

The assignment must be presented in report format. Ensure you use the recommended readings for Assignment 2 and consult the *Learning Materials* for additional information about the structure of a written report. Also consult the Marking Rubric for written assignments and reports available on this unit's Blackboard site in the *Assessment* section.

Tip: Usually 10% over or under the word allowance is OK.

- What is the suggested word length? **2,500-3,000 words**
- Who is the report for? **Colin Coif and Pamela Perm, the owners of *Stylish***
- What is the purpose of this business report? **To inform Coif and Perm (the clients) whether it is advisable to open a new salon in Hawthorn i.e. to suggest a possible improvement to their business**
- What information sources do you need to use for the assignment? **Primary sources (eg. industry reports, government regulations etc) and secondary sources (eg textbook).**

[Return to Activity 2.](#)

ACTIVITY 3 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

1. Introduction

1. Background/ context

Stylish is a hairdressing business that currently owns and operates two hairdressing salons in inner Melbourne: Carlton and South Melbourne. The owners of the business (hereon the client) are interested in expanding their operations, and have identified the Hawthorn area as a possible location for the establishing of a third salon.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide preliminary information to the client about: i) the overall viability of establishing a salon in the Hawthorn area; and ii) key management and marketing issues that need to be considered in ensuring the success and profitability of any proposed new outlet. Note that the study considers the viability of the business in broad management and marketing terms only; it does not provide a comprehensive financial analysis of the proposed expansion.

3. Scope

In the investigation of these issues, two analytical concepts were used, namely Mega Environment and Task Environment. The Mega Environment is concerned with the external environment in which a business operates; the Task Environment considers conditions that a business faces in its immediate environment (Bartol et al. 2008, p.72). Data for the study came from a range of sources related to both these environments including: industry research reports, local government reports, and census data.

4. Method

5. Outline

The report is divided into two main sections: a *Findings* section, which presents information about both environments as they relate to *Stylish*; and a *Recommendations* section which provides specific suggestions for the running of the proposed business.

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ACTIVITY 4 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

- a) The sociocultural/demographic element refers to the “attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, behaviours and associated demographic trends characteristic of a given geographic area” (Bartol et al. 2008, p. 73). Victoria is currently experiencing high population growth, lead only by NSW. While population growth is high in the state, the rate of growth in the hair and beauty industry in Victoria is relatively low (see Table 2). For example, between 2003 and 2007, Victoria’s rate of growth in this industry was 1.9% compared to Queensland’s growth rate of 5.3%, but Victoria’s volatility rate was lower, at 37.7% compared to Queensland’s at 42.5% (Hair Industry Report, 2010)

This example is less analytical. It contains information and acknowledges the sources, but does not comment on the significance of the findings (what this means in terms of the purpose of the report).

- b) The sociocultural/demographic element refers to the “attitudes, values, norms, beliefs, behaviours and associated demographic trends characteristic of a given geographic area” (Bartol et al. 2008, p. 73). Victoria is currently experiencing high population growth, lead only by NSW. While population growth is high in the state, the rate of growth in the hair and beauty industry in Victoria is relatively low as is volatility in the industry (see Table 2). These data suggest that investment in the industry in Victoria is generally a sound proposition.

This example is more analytical. It contains information and acknowledges the sources, but it does more than just describe the information. It evaluates the significance of the findings in terms of the purpose of the report: ‘The data suggest that investment in the industry in Victoria is generally a sound proposition.’

[Return to Activity 4.](#)

ACTIVITY 5 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Thinking about the recommendation above (i. e. the suggestion for Stylish’s management to focus on a younger customer base, including young males), which one of the following two paragraphs from the findings section provides a rationale for this recommendation?

- b) A significant trend in this younger inner urban demographic is the increasing interest shown by young men in grooming and appearance, sometimes associated with the so-called ‘metrosexual’ lifestyle (IBIS World Report 2011, p. 9). Such a trend has seen the decline of demand for traditional barbershop services, and dominance in inner urban areas of the unisex salon. While the hairdressing and beauty market continues to be dominated by the female customer base, major opportunities exist to expand product and service offerings for males.

This paragraph describes male interest in “grooming and appearance”, and forms part of the justification for recommending a focus on this demographic.

[Return to Activity 5.](#)

ACTIVITY 6 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

→ *Stylish* is a hairdressing business that currently owns and operates two hairdressing salons in inner Melbourne.

Purpose

→ The study investigated whether the opening of an additional salon in the Hawthorn area is a viable option for the business.

Method

→ 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.

Conclusion

→ The conclusion drawn from the analysis is that in the present environment the company would benefit from an expansion of its outlets.

Recommendation

→ A number of recommendations are made concerning the nature of the business including the need for a focus on targeting the younger, male population.

[Return to Activity 6.](#)

ACTIVITY 7 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

Study the following items from the list of references from the *Stylish* report. Which are **secondary sources**? Which are **primary sources**?

- a) Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011, Household income and income distribution , viewed 10 September 2011, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6523.0>

Primary source: Note the author here is an organisation

- b) Baltzan, P & Phillips, A 2010, Business Driven Technology,4th edn, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Secondary source

- c) Bartol, K, Tein, M, Matthews, G, Sharma, B & Scott-Ladd, B 2011, Management A pacific rim focus, 6th edn, McGraw-Hill, Australia.

Secondary source

- d) Community profile: Hawthorn: What is our individual income? 2011,Profile id, viewed 10 September 2011, <http://profile.id.com.au/Default.aspx?id=249&pg=124&gid=140&type=enum>

Primary source: Note no author is evident for this source. Only the title of the website is available

Return to Activity 7.

ACTIVITY 8 SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

IMPERSONAL STYLE

Rewrite the following sentences using a more impersonal style.

1. In the investigation of these issues, two analytical concepts **have been used**, namely Mega Environment and Task Environment.
2. **The report is divided** into two main sections: a findings section, and a recommendations section

DOT-POINTS

Read the following list of recommendations. The last item is not parallel with the preceding three. Rewrite it so that it is in a consistent parallel form:

The following recommendations are made:

- *the target customer base should be younger clients*
- *the focus should be on high quality services*
- *marketing strategies should be organised around social media*
- ***a clear career pathway should be provided for staff***

Return to Activity 8.