Writing reports

Redacción de informes en inglés

Structure

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Modals: Obligation

Must, have to, mustn't, …

What are reports?

Tips and guidelines for reports

4 tips

How to write irresistible reports

Joining nouns

The Saxon Genitive vs compound nouns

Writing mistakes to avoid

Improving your accuracy

Anglo – EU Translations

How to connect sentences

Modal Verbs

- **Obligation**
- Advice or Suggestion
- Probability
- Ability & Permission

Obligations

Obligation

Must – Internal

Have to – External

Mustn't – Negative (prohibition)

No Obligation

Don't have to

Needn't

Must

Must means that there is an internal obligation. We use it to express an obligation that we impose on ourselves.

I must remember to finish the reports today!

It's my responsibility to do it.

Have to

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Have to is use to express an external obligation. This could refer to regulations, orders, rules or laws.

I have to drive on the correct side of the street.

You have to pay your taxes.

Be careful with the "to". Have is with "to" but must is without "to"

Mustn't

We use mustn't (always contracted) when we talk about a negative obligation: a prohibition.

You mustn't travel without a mask

Don't have to & needn't

To indicate the absence of an obligation we use "Don't have to" or "needn't".

You **don't have to** work on Sunday
You **needn't** work on Sunday

Obligations Overview

	Obligation		No obligation

Present

Internal   *external*   *prohibition*

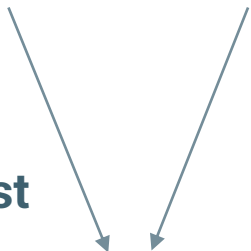I must go   I have to go   I mustn't go   I don't have to go = I needn't go

Past

I had to go   I wasn't supposed to go   I didn't have to go ≠ I needn't have gone

Obligations

Translations

PHRASE	SIGNIFICADO
I must exercise more.	Debo hacer más ejercicio.
You mustn't wear shorts to the office.	No debes llevar pantalmones cortos a la oficina.
The students don't have to worry.	Los alumnos no tienen que preocuparse.
Carlos has to improve his performance.	Carlos tiene que mejorar su rendimiento.
You needn't translate the text.	No es necesario que traduzcas el texto.
We needn't have brought our boots.	No necesitábamos haber traído las botas
Brian wasn't supposed to touch the paintings.	Brian no debió tocar los cuadros
Did you have to study English in school?	¿Tuviste que estudiar inglés en el colegio?

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"The reports of my Death have been greatly exaggerated"

— Mark Twain

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What are reports?

- Description of events or situation

- Evaluation of the facts or result of your research

- Discussion of the possible outcomes

- Recommendations

- Conclusion

Writing style

When writing a report, your aim should be to be absolutely clear. Above all, it should be easy to read and understand, even to someone with little knowledge of the subject area.

You should therefore aim for crisp, precise text, using plain English, and shorter words rather than longer, with short sentences.

5 report tips

Building better sentences

Drafts: Practice makes perfect

During the drafting stage of writing, the writer develops a more cohesive text and explores their topic, directed by purpose, audience, genre, and content.

Drafting helps expand upon, clarify, and modify their initial plans and ideas, and it helps them organize their content into a meaningful sequence or flow.

The Passive

How to avoid blame

Use the passive voice to change the person who does the action to focus on the action itself.

Active: The managers need to make changes in their management style.

Passive: Changes in the management style *need to be made.*

Active: The government will increase the corporate tax rate next year.

Passive: The corporate tax rate *will be increased* next year.

Keep them interested

Use good formatting and whenever possible, include sections, headings and bullet points

To: Provide the name of the person who is going to read the report. If you don't know the name, you can write the position, e.g. the sales manager.

From: Write your name

Date: Write the date. Just stick to the month and day and you can't go wrong, e.g. December 9.

Subject: Write a *concise and helpful title for your report*, so the reader quickly understands what the report is about.

Always consider your audience!

The readers of your report love to find the information immediately and as quickly as possible.

Typically they act as subtitles that divide the main sections of your report and they summarize.

Terms of reference: Why the report was written
Procedure: How you found out what happened
Findings: What you discovered
Conclusions: A summary of the information
Recommendations: What you suggested the reader should do

Using headings

Concise & Organised

Bullet points

Readers enjoy reading organised concepts and bullet points offer an easy way to achieve this. Make sure your bullet points follow the same grammatical structure!

I therefore recommend:

- Organising twice weekly get-togethers
- Introducing teamwork whenever possible
- Creating a bonus scheme to reward high-performing employees

Executive Summary

In a professional context people are often busy and don't have time to read a full report. They read the executive summary to get a quick overview; to evaluate the quality of the report; or even to make a decision.

It needs to make sense to someone who hasn't read the report (and may not ever read it). This means that it must reflect the structure of the report and provide a summary of all sections.

It is **a standalone section** that goes before the main content of the report - it is **not part of the body** and it **does not replace the introduction**.

Compound Nouns

Used for everyday objects/concepts.
2 nouns combine to form 1 new thing

Invert the word order when translating,
e.g. Toalla de playa = Beach towel

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Compound Nouns – examples

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Figures & Data

Margen de beneficios	**Profit margin**
Datos de producción	**Production data**
Presupuesto de publicidad	**Advertisting budget**
Cifras de producción	**production figures**

Places

La fábrica de Sevilla	**The Sevilla factory**
La planta de Madrid	**The Madrid plant**
La oficina de Londres	**The London office**
La instalación de producción	**The production installation**

Teams & posts/positions

9. El director de ventas de Europa — The European Sales Director

10. Equipo de servicio al cliente — Customer service team

11. Los miembros del equipo — The team members

12. Ingeniero de telecomunicaciones — Telecoms engineer

13. Departamento de recursos humanos — HR department

14. Jefe de equipo — Team leader

15. Técnicos de software — Software engineers

16. Gerente regional — Area manager

Compound Nouns

Examples

The Saxon Genitive

- We use it to indicate possession

- Invert the order + add 's

- Possession loses its article.

Eg: The book of the teacher

➡ The teacher's book

Does the possessor refer to **people** or **time**? Yes?

Then it **MUST** use the Saxon genitive.

Can you **personify** the possessor? (companies, animals, places)

Then you **may** use the Saxon Genitive

Is the possessor a **thing**?

Then it's not alive and therefore can't possess = no Saxon Genitive

Saxon Genitive

Examples

1. Can you confirm that next Tuesday's meeting is scheduled?

2. I had a wonderful time at last summer's sales conference

3. I'm afraid I can't attend Friday's meeting

4. I don't know Brian's schedule

5. Would you like to speak to Mrs Demai's personal assistant?

Remember that using the Saxon Genitive is not optional with people or time!

How to understand English.

Reading between the lines

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Understanding the meaning

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What the British say	What the British mean	What others understand
I hear what you say	I disagree and do not want to discuss it further	He accepts my point of view
With the greatest respect,	I think you are an idiot	He is listening to me
That's not bad	That's good	That's poor
That is a very brave proposal	You are insane	He thinks I have courage
Quite good	A bit disappointing	Quite good
Oh, incidentally …	The primary purpose of our talk is…	That is not very important
I was a bit disappointed	I am annoyed	It doesn't really matter
Very interesting	This is clearly nonsense	They are impressed

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Understanding the meaning

What the British say	What the British mean	What others understand
I would suggest	Do it, or be prepared to justify yourself	Think about it, do what you like.
I'll bear it in mind	I've forgotten it already	He will consider it.
I'm sure it's my fault	It's your fault	Why do they think it was their fault?
You must come for dinner	Not an invitation, I'm just being polite.	I will get an invitation soon.
I almost agree	I don't agree at all	We're close to an agreement
I only have a minor comments	Please re-write this completely	He has found a few typos
Could we consider some some other options?	I don't like your idea	They have not decided yet.