

# How to write a report

In this lesson you will learn useful phrases for writing a formal report.

## Starter

- 1 What kind of reports do you produce in your work?
- 2 What kind of grammatical structures are most common in formal reports (e.g. adverb phrases, the passive)?
- 3 Tick the following phrases which would be suitable for inclusion in a formal business report? Why?
  - a \_\_\_\_\_ to make amends for the use of
  - b \_\_\_\_\_ we'll introduce fighter steps
  - c \_\_\_\_\_ whereby they agree to their photo being used
  - d \_\_\_\_\_ so that this doesn't happen again
  - e \_\_\_\_\_ investigate the circumstances
  - f \_\_\_\_\_ to rectify the situation
  - g \_\_\_\_\_ to make up for using
  - h \_\_\_\_\_ fighter measures will be introduced
  - i \_\_\_\_\_ which says we can use their photo
  - j \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid future incidents of this nature
  - k \_\_\_\_\_ try to find out what happened
  - l \_\_\_\_\_ to put the matter straight

## Expressions

- 1 Fredrik Koskinen is the assistant personnel manager for the TTMI Power office in Helsinki. He has investigated an incident for head office in the UK. Read his report and answer the questions.
  - 1 What has happened?
  - 2 Why is this situation particularly awkward?
  - 3 How will they correct the situation?
  - 4 How, in general, will such a situation be avoided in future?
- 2 Use the formal report phrases from Starter 3 to complete the report.
- 3 Find underlined phrases in the report which express the following.
  - 1 It would be advisable to \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2 This report aims to \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3 Here is what we have learned. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 4 So that we can deal with the problem of \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 This incident raises a number of points for discussion \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 So it is not suitable at all \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 And, because \_\_\_\_\_

## Speaking

- 1 Look at these sentences from the report. If you had to express the information in a meeting, what phrases would you say instead?
  - 1 The new TTMI power station brochures, which were produced last month, include a photo for which permission was not sought.
  - 2 Brochures with this photo will be recalled, and the person in question will receive a formal apology.
  - 3 On May 12th, Mr Laine lodged a formal complaint with TTMI Power, stating that his photo had been used without his permission.
  - 4 His photo had been taken whilst visiting our power stations in northern Finland for an interview.

## Writing

- 1 Correct the punctuation in the sentences below.
  - 1 We interviewed sixteen candidates, the only one, who spoke Spanish, was Laura White.
  - 2 A letter of apology has been sent to the director, we are hoping this will close the matter.
  - 3 Mr Hart's wife who returned a damaged headset last month has now been sent a replacement.
  - 4 The quarterly report which I sent to head office still hasn't arrived.
  - 5 Samuel visited the architects, who we want to work with last week.
  - 6 We shortlisted fifteen candidates for the post, we have only interviewed five.

### Hint

In BrE and AmE, a point is used when writing decimals:  
7.31 seven point three one  
4.02 four point oh two  
0.75 zero point seven five

### Hint

In Continental Europe the point rule is the other way in writing:  
6,9 six point nine  
In other regions and countries (e.g. South Africa) the comma is also used as the decimal separator.

## Report on publicity materials (Brochure: TTMI Promo 12307)

### 1 Executive summary

The new TTMI power station brochures, which were produced last month, include a photo for which permission was not sought. This person is not an employee of TTMI Power and has recently taken a post with a key competitor. As a result, and <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, brochures with this photo will be recalled, and the person in question will receive a formal apology. In addition, <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ at TTMI regarding photography.

### 2 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ surrounding the printing of a photograph on TTMI's publicity materials without permission. It will outline:

- the sequence of events
- the people involved
- compensation
- recommendations <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3 Findings

The following points summarize our key findings. Magnus Laine's photo was taken while TTMI Power was collating information in February for the brochure which was printed in April. On May 12th, Mr Laine lodged a formal complaint with TTMI Power, stating that his photo had been used without his permission. His photo had been taken while visiting our power stations in northern Finland for an interview.

## Report on publicity materials (Brochure: TTMI Promo 12307)

Mr Laine has since taken a boardroom-level post with POL Voimaa, one of our key competitors. It is therefore highly inappropriate that his photo appears on TTMI publicity materials.

### 4 Conclusions

This incident raises a number of issues. Firstly, it is clear that TTMI Power photographers should have checked with the personnel department. The photographer obviously did not realize that Mr Laine was not a staff member. In addition, the marketing department should have made sure that permission had been requested from all persons photographed. Furthermore, the fact that Mr Laine now works for the competition potentially impacts on POL Voimaa's own client relations.

### 5 Recommendations

Both Mr Laine and POL Voimaa should be sent a formal written apology and informed that all TTMI Power brochures which contain Mr Laine's picture will be recalled <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ his photograph. In order to address the issue of publicity materials still in store, any relevant brochure should be destroyed. It is strongly recommended that, in future, staff or clients whose photos are taken should be asked specifically to sign a document <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ on corporate materials. It is suggested that this would be an advisable procedure across the entire TTMI Power network.

## Language box

Use a comma with non-defining relative clauses (clauses giving extra information):

John, who won't be in again until Monday, has been asked to write the report.

Don't use a comma with defining relative clauses (clauses explaining exactly what is being discussed):

The man who knew her has left.

Use a conjunction as well as a comma to separate independent clauses:

We have discussed the problem, and we have decided not to pay compensation.

## Look

Look again at the report in Expressions. Find more examples of these punctuation rules.

## Lesson record

3 new words                      3 useful phrases  
from this lesson                from this lesson

1 ..... 1 .....  
2 ..... 2 .....  
3 ..... 3 .....

Things to remember

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