

Welcome to Academic Skills!

LCLM4001 Academic Skills

Week 10



Remembering last week

We learnt:

- The importance of reflection for University and Business.
- How to write Goals and create a Personal Development Plan
- Key requirement of Task 3

Why this matters:

- It helps you understand what you are doing well and what needs improvement
- It improves future assignments and academic performance.
- It develops independent learning skills.



From last week to this week

- Work in pairs.
- Discuss:
 - What do you remember from last week's reflections?
 - What writing skills or feedback stood out to you?
 - What did you feel more confident about?
- You do not need details.
- Just key ideas.



Let's consider together

- What themes kept coming up in your conversations?
- What kind of feedback or writing skills did you mention?
- Did anything from last week feel clearer than before?

What today is about

Understanding how business reports are structured and what each section is for

Recognising how introductions, findings, and conclusions work together to communicate clearly

Practising how to use examples and feedback to improve report writing

Business Reports: What and why?



Why do businesses use reports?

- Reports help organisations make decisions
- Reports organise information so it is clear and useful
- Reports allow managers to understand problems and results quickly
- Reports provide a record of findings, evidence, and recommendations
- Reports support professional and consistent communication

Reporting in Reality

- Most companies produce 5 reports per month or more
- Most companies spend 3 hours or more making reports
- Most companies have very standardized reports
- Reporting and monitoring improve performance
- Regular monitoring and reporting bring concrete benefits

Databox (n.d.) The state of business reporting. Available at: <https://databox.com/state-of-business-reporting> (Accessed: 27 February 2026).

Business report structure: the key parts

Title

- States what the report is about

Introduction

- Explains the purpose of the report and what it will cover

Findings

- Presents what was discovered or observed

Evidence

- Shows data, examples, or information that supports the findings

Conclusion

- Summarises what the findings mean and why they matter



Putting a business report in order

Your task

- You will see the main sections of a business report.
- Work in pairs.
- Arrange the sections into an order that makes sense to a reader.

Think about:

- What would a reader expect first?
- What information would they need before making a decision?
- What would logically come at the end?

- There may be more than one possible order.
- Focus on flow, not rules.



What is the job of each section?

- You now have the main sections of a business report.
- This time, focus on what each section does for the reader.

Your task

- In groups:
 - Match each section name to the card that describes its job
 - Discuss and agree on the best match
- There is one best fit for each section.
- Focus on purpose, not wording.



What do we think?



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Writing Introductions and Conclusions



Introductions and Conclusions in Business Reports

- Every section of a report has a job.
- Introductions and conclusions are especially important because they:
 - guide the reader
 - frame the findings
 - support decision-making
- Let's look at what effective ones do.

How do introductions work?

Topic

This report examines the recent increase in customer complaints within KAIKO Ltd. The purpose of the report is to identify the main causes of the complaints and assess their impact on customer satisfaction. The report will present key findings from customer feedback data and transaction records, before drawing conclusions and outlining recommendations for improvement.

Purpose

Map of the
Report

How do conclusions work?

Summary of Findings

Overall, the findings show that customer complaints have increased mainly due to delivery delays and reduced staffing levels. This suggests that current operational processes are negatively affecting customer satisfaction and may impact long-term customer retention if not addressed. It is therefore recommended that the organisation reviews delivery scheduling and increases staff support during peak periods.

Meaning /
Implications

Recommendations



Identifying sentence jobs

- Identify what each sentence is doing
- Work individually.
- You will read:
 - one introduction
 - one conclusion

Your task

- Introduction
- Highlight:
 - Topic
 - Purpose
 - Map of the report

- Conclusion
- Highlight:
 - Summary of findings
 - Meaning or implications
 - Recommendation
- You are identifying jobs, not judging quality.



What did you think?

- Take a moment to think about the task you just completed.
 - Which sentence job was easiest to spot?
 - Which one made you pause and think?
- Each sentence in an introduction or conclusion has a clear job.
- Seeing those jobs makes it easier to improve weak writing.



Improving a weak introduction

- You will now improve one weak introduction.
- Use what you know about:
 - Topic
 - Purpose
 - Map of the report
- Remember:
 - You are improving clarity and structure
 - You do not need to rewrite everything
 - Small changes are enough



Let's bring it together

- Take a moment to think about the rewrite you just completed.
 - Did you need to write a completely new introduction?
 - Which changes made the biggest difference?
- Improving report writing usually means:
 - making the topic clearer
 - explaining the purpose more precisely
 - Giving the reader a better idea of what the report will cover
- Report writing improves step by step, not all at once.

Break time!

See you in 10 minutes 😊

Using Evidence Clearly



Using evidence clearly in a business report

- In earlier weeks, we practised:
 - paraphrasing ideas
 - summarising sources
 - using evidence without copying
 - understanding why referencing matters
- In business reports:
 - evidence supports claims
 - evidence builds trust
 - evidence helps decisions
 - evidence may be internal or external
 - external information needs to be referenced
- Let's look at how this works in practice.

Let's read a paragraph from a report

Claim
Needs Evidence

**Internal
Evidence**

Staff attendance within the customer service department declined over the past six months, with absence rates increasing by 12 per cent according to internal attendance records. Customer feedback logs also indicate that reduced staffing levels during peak periods have led to longer waiting times and lower satisfaction scores. This pattern reflects wider trends identified in external business reporting, which show that regular monitoring of workforce data can significantly improve organisational performance when acted upon (Databox, n.d.)

Let's read a paragraph from a report

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External Evidence
With reference



Identifying Evidence

- You will read two short report paragraphs.
- Work individually.
- Underline:
 - where evidence is used
 - where information comes from inside the organisation
 - where information comes from outside the organisation
- Remember
 - You are not judging quality
 - You are not rewriting anything
 - Focus on what counts as evidence



Let's check together

- Compare your answers with **the person next to you**.
- Discuss briefly:
 - Where did you see evidence in the paragraphs?
 - Which evidence came from inside the organisation?
 - Which information came from outside the organisation?
- There are different types of evidence in business reports.
- What matters is recognising where information comes from and why it supports a claim.

Let's check what we noticed **as a group**.

- What helped you recognise evidence in the paragraphs?
- How did you tell the difference between internal and external information?
- Why do you think some information was referenced and some was not?
- Business reports rely on evidence to be credible and useful.
- The key skill is recognising where information comes from and how it supports a claim.



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Linking Ideas



Linking ideas clearly in a business report

- In business reports:
 - ideas need to flow logically
 - readers should not have to guess the connection
 - linking words help guide the reader
- These words are called **signposting expressions**.



Let's try it out



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Using signposting in a paragraph

- Using linking words
- You will read a short report paragraph.
- **Your task**
 - Add two signposting phrases
 - Make the connection between ideas clearer

Remember:

- Do not rewrite the content
- Add links where they make sense
- Focus on clarity for the reader



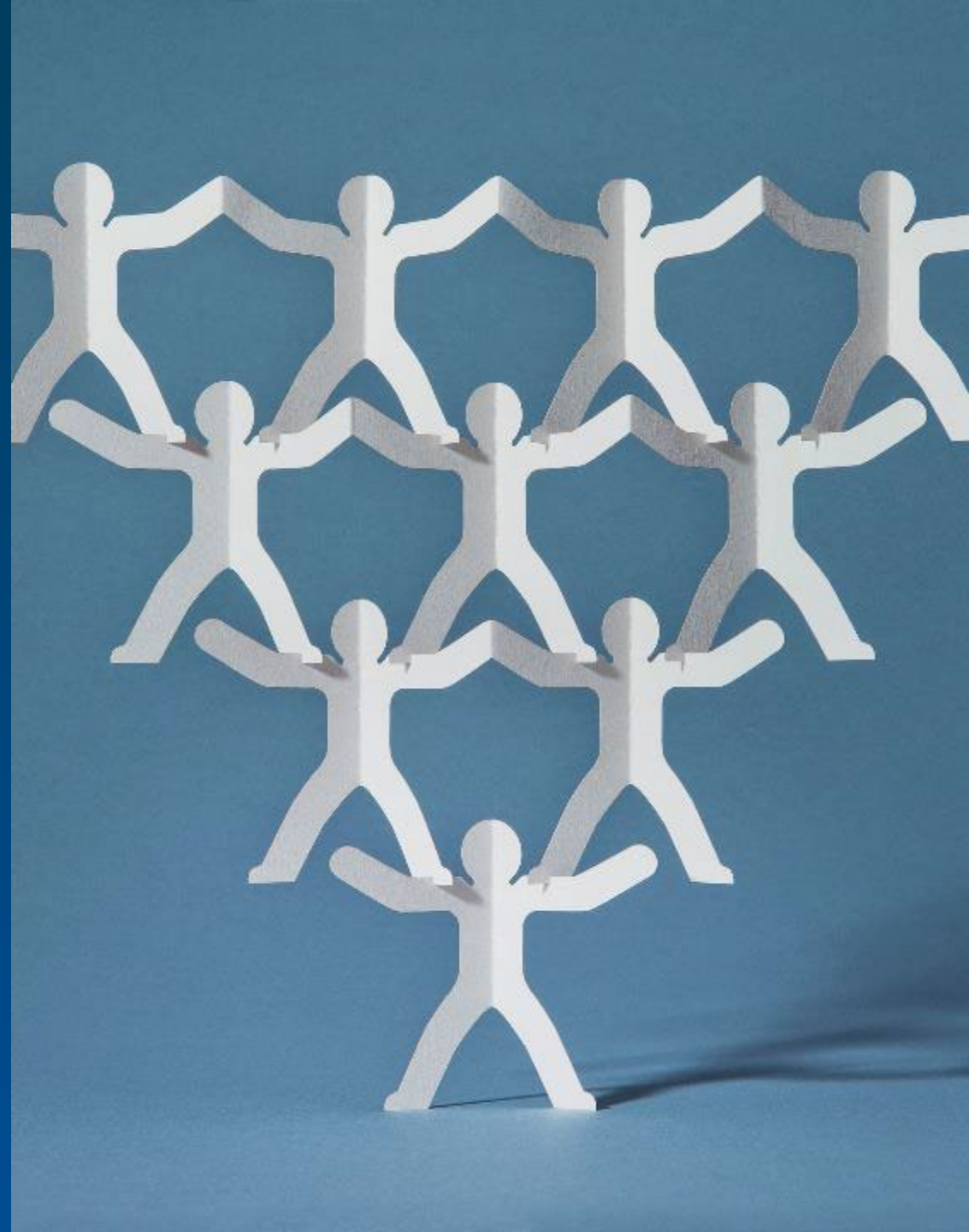
What could it look like

- Staff absence levels increased during the last quarter. **As a result**, customer response times also increased during peak periods. **In addition**, management concerns were raised about the impact on service quality.
- Staff absence levels increased during the last quarter. **In addition**, customer response times increased during peak periods. **As a result**, management concerns were raised about the impact on service quality.



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Let's bring it together





A complete report paragraph

- You will look at a complete business report paragraph.

Your task

- Identify:
 - the main idea
 - the evidence
 - the explanation (what the evidence means)
- Focus on how the paragraph works, not how long it is.



Read the Paragraph

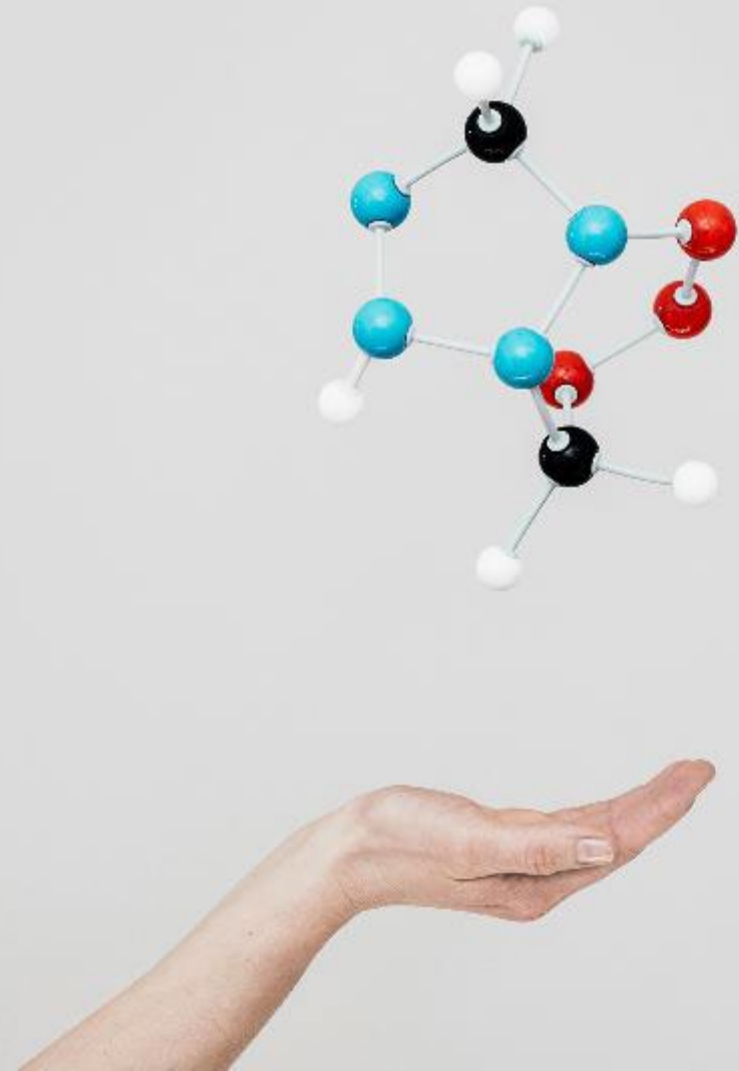
Staff absence levels increased during the last financial quarter within the customer service department. Internal attendance records show an 18 per cent increase in reported absences compared to the previous quarter.

As a result, reduced staffing during peak periods led to longer response times and increased management concern about service quality.

Break time!

See you in 10 minutes 😊

Learning from Examples



The use of examples

- Before writing our own reports, it helps to look at examples.
- Good writers:
 - read other texts carefully
 - notice what works
 - explain why something is clear or unclear
- Today, you will
 - look at sample writing
 - identify strengths and weaknesses
 - practise giving constructive feedback

Useful feedback language

Use these sentence starters to help you explain your ideas:

- This introduction is clear because...
- One strength of this conclusion is...
- The purpose of the report is clear / unclear because...
- This section could be improved by...
- The reader might find this unclear because...

**Focus on the
writing, not the
writer.**



Analysing examples to improve writing

- You will work in groups of three.
- You will read sample introductions and conclusions.
- Your tasks:
 - Decide which examples are strong / OK / weak
 - Highlight good features (clarity, purpose, message)
 - Use the feedback sentence starters to explain your decisions
- Focus on the writing, not the writer.

Feedback sentence starters

- This introduction is clear because...
- One strength of this conclusion is...
- The purpose of the report is clear / unclear because...
- This could be improved by...
- The reader might find this unclear because



What did strong examples do better?

- As a class, think about:
- What made the strong examples clearer?
- What was missing in the OK or weak ones?
- What patterns did you notice?

Investing in employee training is essential for a company's success.

Main Idea

This makes the company more competitive and helps it achieve its goals.

Which sentence gives examples?

Providing structured training helps employees improve how they manage tasks.

Which sentences provide evidence?

It also allows them to take on additional responsibilities, despite difficulties when learning new skills (Buster, 2024).

Which sentences offer explanation
or further details?

For example, if a retail employee receives training in stock management software, they can reduce ordering errors and ensure products are available for customers.

Which sentence wraps things up
or links back to the main idea?

As a result, the business operates more efficiently and customer satisfaction improves.

Therefore, companies should make training a priority for all employees.



Reflection

Please answer:

- One thing I learned about report structure
- One thing I understand better about introductions or conclusions
- One thing I still want to practise
- Write 3 short sentences. Use simple English.
- You will post your answers on Moodle in the forum “Reflection Space – Individual”.
- Only you and the tutor can see your post.
- This is not marked.
- You do not need to share with the class.



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Recap



Today we learnt:

Understanding why business reports are used and how they support decisions

Recognising the structure of a business report and the job of each section

Improving introductions and conclusions by focusing on sentence purpose

Identifying and using evidence (internal and external) clearly

Using linking words to make ideas flow within a paragraph

Analysing examples and practising constructive feedback

Assessment Task

- The third task in the Assessment Portfolio is **due in this week.**
- This is a good time to show me your draft
- Or ask any questions you have.