

Quick Guide: Checking Your Report

The third and final stage of report writing is to check your report. Leave time between finishing and checking so you read it with fresh eyes. It may be worth asking somebody else to read it as well as they may spot different mistakes to you. See the 10 points below, which are divided into 3 stages, for checking longer reports. For shorter reports, still check everything but you will be able to check all the points at once.

Stage 1: Check text for sense, spelling, punctuation and grammar

- 1.1 Does it make sense? Is it in a logical order? Is there an Introduction clearly stating the purpose of the report, who the report is for, the method used, any parameters that you've worked within and a map of how the report is structured?
- 1.2 Check the words: spelling; most appropriate, simplest and specific; avoid clichés, tautologies and extra words; beware of commonly confused words; check comparative and superlative; check choice of words; check consistency; check if word or phrase is one word, hyphenated or separate words.
- 1.3 Check sentences: word order - subject first, verb second; is the most important idea at the beginning of the sentence?; have you used active whenever possible?; avoid ambiguity; is the sentence between 10 and 20 words?
- 1.4 Check grammar: subject and verb agreement; active -v- passive; avoid split infinitives; correct tenses.
- 1.5 Check all punctuation: pay attention to apostrophes, use of colons and semi-colons, and question marks. (On some of your questions check if you mean to ask a question, or if you mean to make a statement.)

Stage 2: Check paragraphs, section and page numbering, and other figures e.g. adding up, columns aligned, dates etc

- 2.1 Check paragraphs: one theme, topic sentence to introduce, connecting words between paragraphs to make them flow.
- 2.2 Check consistency: words, names, dates, matching salutation and ending, numbers -v- figures, section and page numbering - consistency with contents?

Stage 3: Check house style, formatting, spacing and margins

- 3.1 Check document matches house or writer's style.
- 3.2 Check headings, paragraph numbering, sub-paragraphs, bullet points.
- 3.3 Check formatting.

Compiled by Judith Di-Castri