

Business

TASK

Your boss has read the following article and wants you to prepare a 1-paragraph summary to email out to your entire team. He expects it to be grammatically perfect.

Planning A Report

Usually you will have collected such a mass of information that you cannot decide where to plunge in and begin. So, before you start to write you must make some kind of plan.

This will save you hours of writing and will help to produce a better-organised report.

Here are two different ways of planning.

An **outline** begins as a large, blank sheet of paper onto which you pour out all your facts, ideas, observations and so on, completely at random. Write in note form, and try to get everything down as fast as possible.

When you have got all your points on paper, start to organise them, group them, and assess them for strength, relevance, and their place in the report.

You can then number the points in order or put headings next to them such as 'Intro', 'Discussion', 'Conclusion' and so on. Use lines and arrows to link up related points.

Gradually you will create a network of ideas grouped under headings - this is the structure of your report. Leave it for a day or two if you can. Return with fresh ideas, add points you'd forgotten, and cross out anything you don't need.

Mind mapping is a different way of planning that suits some writing better. The idea is the same: by pouring out ideas at random, you can concentrate on the content, and organise the material at leisure when the ideas are set down.

There is no special magic to a mind map. Start by putting the topic in a box in the middle of the page, then draw lines to branch out from it with your main ideas.

It is easy to add new information and to make links between the main ideas. Order and organisation will often take care of themselves.

Extracted from: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/reportguide.html>

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Teacher's Notes

This guided writing is designed to test students summarising skills, but could also be used as a launch point for discussing methods of planning reports and general mind mapping skills. (See: <http://www.jamesabela.co.uk/bus/mindmaps.htm>)

Discussion points:

- How do students currently plan reports
- The best method of planning a report
- How can you make a report that is clear and simple

Steps in writing the summary:

- Extract the key-info:
 - Do people know what Mindmaps are?
 - How much do people already plan their reports?
 - What information can be cut from the summary
 - What are the key steps to making a well-planned report
- How can the English be shortened
 - Using bullets / numbered lists
 - Can a diagram be used?
- Write the summary check it and see if it can be shortened again

Grammar points

- Shortening paragraphs for Emails
- Grammar in ordered lists and bullets
- Present simple for instructions

This could be written in class as pair writing or given out as homework.