Give advice on the problems with reports
with the advice phrases and reports vocabulary

Choose one problem from the next page and give advice on how to solve it. Your partner will react to your advice and suggest their own advice. Discuss it for as long as you like, then take turns choosing topics to do the same with.

Useful language for making recommendations
We would (definitely/ greatly/ probably/ really/ significantly) **benefit** from…
We have (absolutely/ almost/ virtually) no **choice** but to…
… **could** (conceivably/ possibly/ potentially) ameliorate…
I (also/ do/ really) think it would be a good **idea** to…
It is (extremely/ incredibly) **important** to…
We (absolutely/ really) **must** ensure that…
We (almost certainly/ also/ clearly/ desperately/ probably/ really) **need/ require**…
The only (feasible/ other/ realistic) **option** is to…
If that is unsuccessful, another **possibility** (worth looking into) is to…
I (highly/ personally/ strongly/ thoroughly/ wholeheartedly) **recommend**…
My (chief/ main) **recommendation** would be to…
In my (personal/ professional) view, we **should**…
One (long-term/ popular/ possible/ practical/ short-term) **solution** is to…
… would (fully/ partially) **solve**…
After…, the (logical/ obvious) next **step** would be to…
I (humbly) **suggest** that we...
… is (absolutely/ utterly) **vital/ essential/ crucial** in order to achieve…
It is (definitely/ probably/ well) **worth** considering…

Ask about any problems you don't understand, can't think of advice for, etc, then do the language tasks below.

Use similar language to give advice on other kinds of business writing, for example:

advertising copy	agendas
catalogues	contracts
CVs/ resumés	direct mail/ spam
emails	leaflets/ pamphlets
(technical/ instruction) manuals/ handbooks	mission statements
memos/ memorandums/ memoranda/ group emails	minutes
newsletters	performance review/ job review
press releases	(job) references
social media content (tweets, etc)	web content

- The **course of action** suggested in your report's **first draft** will mean a lot more work for your section.
- You are not sure which of the **main aims** of the report to **focus on** most.
- When you **brought an issue to your boss's attention** you were asked to write a report on it, but the report is likely to be ignored.
- You are not sure if you should mention the conflict that is the **background** to your report being **commissioned**.
- You are not sure how many **bullet points** you can or should use.
- You have 20 **bar charts**, **pie charts** and **line graphs** that you want to include.
- Explaining the **root causes** of the problem will involve blaming one particular person.
- It's difficult to make **strong recommendations** based on your **final conclusion**.
- There is a lot of **detailed data** to include but your boss has asked you to be **concise**.
- You want to **distribute** the report in a way that makes it most likely to be read.
- You want to **strongly emphasise** something without being too forceful (so maybe without using **bold script** or **underlining** to **highlight** the **key points**).
- You are sure your **final conclusion** is correct, but have little **concrete evidence**.
- You've read contradictory advice on the best font and **font size** for **internal reports**.
- You are not sure if you should use rather boring standard **section headings** or more interesting, creative ones.
- You are not sure if you should put **optional extra information** such as tables of data in **appendices**, **footnotes**, or the body of the report.
- You've been asked to write a report on an **ongoing issue** which might have changed between finishing the report and being able to distribute it.
- The **vast majority** of staff will disagree with your conclusions.
- You've heard different recommendations for the most **logical order** for your report.
- You've been asked to **give an overview** of the huge area such as HR worldwide.
- You need to quickly **pad out** a report.
- You want to give your **personal perspective** but still seem **unbiased/ objective**.
- You want to be **persuasive** without seeming subjective.
- You are not sure what the best **step-by-step process** will be to complete your report.
- You aren't confident of your ability to **proofread** your English report.
- Only half of the **customer satisfaction questionnaire responses** will have arrived by the deadline for writing the report.
- The report will have less impact if the negative comments are only **anonymous quotes**, as was originally planned.
- People keep asking you for gossip on a **confidential report**.
- You don't understand some jargon in a **financial report** you've been asked to read.
- You are not sure about the right level of **(in)formality** for an **internal report**.
- Most **progress reports** in your company are **pointless wastes of time**.
- You don't trust the **market research findings** you have to base your report on.
- Being too realistic about the **long-term consequences** of the **current situation** will make you seem too negative.
- You think not many readers will make it as far as a **final summary**, but if you put an **executive summary** at the start then they probably won't even look at the body.

Longer recommendations phrases

Write at least one word someone in the middle of each phrase below (= not before the first word and not after the last word).

We would **benefit** from…

We have no **choice** but to…

… **could** ameliorate…

I think it would be a good **idea** to…

It is **important** to…

We **must** ensure that…

We **need/ require**…

The only **option** is to…

If that is unsuccessful, another **possibility** is to…

I **recommend**…

My **recommendation** would be to…

In my (personal/ professional) view, we **should**…

One **solution** is to…

… would **solve**…

After…, the next **step** would be to…

I **suggest** that we...

… is **vital/ essential/ crucial** in order to achieve…

It is **worth** considering…

Use the mixed answers below to check and give you ideas, then check with the first page above.

Mixed answers word by word

Many can be used more than once.

- absolutely
- almost
- almost certainly
- also
- chief
- clearly
- conceivably
- definitely
- desperately
- do
- extremely
- feasible/ other/ realistic
- fully/ partially
- greatly
- highly
- humbly
- incredibly
- logical
- long-term
- main
- obvious
- personal
- personally
- popular
- possible
- possibly
- potentially
- practical
- probably
- professional
- really
- short-term
- significantly
- strongly
- thoroughly
- utterly
- virtually
- well
- wholeheartedly
- worth looking into

Mixed answers line by line
- absolutely/ almost/ virtually
- absolutely/ really
- absolutely/ utterly
- almost certainly/ also/ clearly/ desperately/ probably/ really
- also/ do/ really
- chief/ main
- conceivably/ possibly/ potentially
- definitely/ greatly/ probably/ really/ significantly
- definitely/ probably/ well
- extremely/ incredibly
- feasible/ other/ realistic
- fully/ partially
- highly/ personally/ strongly/ thoroughly/ wholeheartedly
- humbly
- logical/ obvious
- long-term/ popular/ possible/ practical/ short-term
- personal/ professional
- worth looking into