



# top tips

## Writing effective reports

1. Don't assume everyone will read every section of your report. If it's over a couple of pages long, include an executive summary and point them to the detail in the body of the report.
2. Break up the text with headings, subheadings, lists and illustrations. Keep paragraphs short (no more than seven lines) and have plenty of white space on the page.
3. Keep sentences short - under 25 words (about two lines) for maximum readability.
4. Edit ruthlessly. Most of us have been trained to be wordy to meet essay word counts. Try to cut the number of words in your first draft by at least 20%.
5. Prefer the active voice - 'the cat sat on the mat' rather than 'the mat was sat on by the cat'. It's more direct, clear and engaging.