

# Unit 3: Report Writing

## AIM

The aim of this unit is to enable the serving inspectors to write effective and constructive reports through the understanding of the purpose, types, formats, language, styles and techniques used in report writing.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit inspectors will be able to:

- write comprehensive reports
- write different types of reports using different formats
- use acceptable language, style and techniques of report writing
- use such reports for evaluation and recommendations for further action.

## CONTENT SUMMARY

- 3.1 Purpose of Report Writing
- 3.2 Types of Reports
- 3.3 Formats
- 3.4 Language and Styles
- 3.5 Evaluation
- 3.6 Recommendations

### 3.1 PURPOSE OF REPORT WRITING

Inspection reports should be written in clear, simple language. The tone of the report should also reflect the inspector's mood which should always be friendly, sympathetic and helpful. Reports should generally start with the description of the situation, followed by relevant comments, and end with recommendations. Reports should be written as soon as possible after inspection. The longer reports are delayed, the less useful they are found by all those concerned with the implementation of recommendations.

#### Activity 3a

In groups of four, identify and discuss reasons why report writing is important. Each group should present their work to the larger group for further discussion and agreement.

## *Key Information*

**The purpose of report writing includes:**

- giving clear evidence of the school performance in a given period
- identifying strengths and weaknesses
- reporting on the performance of a teacher
- helping the school/educational institution to have a useful base for subsequent actions

- helping planners and decision makers evaluate achievement and progress, and re-assess needs
- ensuring that public funds are being judiciously spent
- ensuring that schools are functioning well and are being run according to national aims, objectives and policies.

### 3.2 TYPES OF REPORTS

#### **Activity 3b**

- (a) In small groups list types of reports and discuss the similarities and differences.
- (b) Report back for further discussion.

#### **Key Information**

There are different types of reports written for different occasions. When writing a report, inspectors should therefore focus on the targeted activity being inspected, for example:

- **Narrative Report on a Teacher**  
e.g. establishing status, scale barrier, other, as may be required
- **Report on a Head**  
e.g. permanent appointment/probational assessment for overall performance
- **Report on a Deputy Head**  
e.g. assessment of overall performance and potential for promotion
- **Report on a Head of Department**  
e.g. assessment of performance
- **Report on an Institution**  
e.g. full institutional report
- **Special Reports**  
e.g. reports on fire fighting

Generally, inspection reports are classified into four categories, namely:

1. **Full Inspection Report**  
This is a comprehensive assessment of all aspects of the school. It is wider in scope compared to any other report. The format combines both management and administration, and subject-report.
2. **Management and Administration Report**  
This is a report that looks at the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and administration at the school to ensure improvement in the quality of education.
3. **Subject-Report**  
This is a report that looks at the effectiveness of teaching/learning in a specific subject area.
4. **Follow-up Report**  
This is a report that looks at corrective measures taken since the previous report.

### 3.3 FORMAT OF REPORTS

#### **Key Information**

Generally, inspection reports follow a particular format. They will vary in the layout depending on the nature of the report. They are likely have the following content:

- Introduction
- Main text
- Conclusion
- Recommendations

In a more formal setting you may be required to include the following:

- Executive Summary
  - Main findings
  - Key issues and actions

The following may be necessary

- Appendix
- Acknowledgements
- References

### 3.4 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

Reports should be written with a balance between active and passive voice. The active sentences should generally be used when describing what has been seen or an event, whereas the passive may be limited to times when one wishes to emphasise something. The language used in the report must be simple and straightforward, and clearly communicate the main findings and key issues for action, including strengths and weaknesses, as well as subsequent actions required from the school. Generally language must be in the past tense.

#### **Examples**

*Active:* "The children are passive participants in the teaching/learning process ..."

*Passive:* "It is strongly recommended that classes start at eight o'clock ..."

**Note:** Avoid the use of the first person singular/plural - "*I*" ... "*we*" ... in written reports. Avoid ambiguous statements in your reports.

The report should contain information which is considered vital to the writer's argument.

#### **Activity 3c**

- Read the case study below and write a comprehensive report to the Regional Education Officer on your findings.
- Compare your report with other inspection reports.

**Note:** As your carry-out case study activity, your report should follow the format outlined above as well as the language and style requirements.

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### **Case Study**

#### **NAMUTONI SCHOOL**

There have been complaints from the community that no teaching and learning is taking place at Namutoni Combined School. An inspector was directed to the school and discovered that the headteacher is constantly absent from the school. The headteacher's vehicle has occasionally been seen transporting passengers between the school and the nearby town during school hours. The teachers are left unsupervised and as a result tend to neglect their teaching responsibilities. The school examination results show clearly that the performance of the school, in relation to other schools in the region, has gone down.

During the previous three years, under a different headteacher, the school was known to be among the top 10 (ten) but is now among the bottom 5 (five). Absenteeism is very high especially on Fridays. Average daily attendance is at 40% with only 10% present on Fridays. Drop-out rates have doubled from 9% to 18% for boys and 11% to 22% for girls respectively.

### **3.5 EVALUATION**

#### ***Key Information***

Evaluation is a very important aspect of report writing. Inspector should make judgements based on the actual data and evidence and not hearsay. Such evaluation will lead to sound conclusions.

#### **Activity 3d**

- (a) Analyse the data contained in the case study in SADC District to be found in the table at the end of this unit.
- (b) What conclusions would you make from your analysis, for inclusion in the report?

### **3.6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

At the end of the report, the main recommendations contained in the report are listed out in a concise form and in the order in which they appear in the report. The reason for this is to enable the reader to make quick references whenever there is little or no time to read the whole report. These recommendations also serve as a check-list for implementation.

**Note:** The reports must be distributed to different stakeholders.

#### **Activity 3e**

What recommendations would you make based on the data from SADC in the attached table?

## **REFLECTION**

Look back and review your work on report writing.

Do you think you can produce an effective, precise and constructive report on any given educational situation?

## **REFERENCES**

Aiyepetu, T.F. (1987) *Inspection of Schools and Colleges*, Heinemann, Lagos

Chief Education Officer's Circular Minute No: 14 of 1988. *Procedures on Reporting by Education Officers in the Regions*: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe

Ministry of Education and Manpower Development (1996) *Central Inspectorate Guidelines for Inspectors of Secondary and High Schools in Lesotho*

**GRADE 7 RESULTS ANALYSIS BY DISTRICT 1996**  
**NAME OF DISTRICT: SADC**  
**GRADE BY SUBJECT, CANDIDATES AND PERCENTAGES**

SCHOOL	CENTRE NO	CNDs	ENGLISH		MATHS		SESOTHO		NDEBELE		GENERAL PAPER		ALL SUBJECTS		POSITION
			1-5	% PASS	1-5	% PASS	1-5	% PASS	1-5	% PASS	1-5	% PASS	1-5	% PASS	
1 TMS	9238	28	25	89.3	28	100	27	86.4			28	100	25	89.3	1
2 Boroko	9627	55	49	89.1	54	89.2	55	100			54	98.2	49	89.1	2
3 Panodzi	9523	76	67	88.6	70	92.1	75	99			72	95	64	84	3
4 Simunye	9046	67	58	86.5	57	86.5	64	97			63	94	54	80.5	4
5 Kurhula	9563	29	25	86.2	29	82.8	29	100			27	93.1	23	79.3	5
6 Kwacha	9300	19	18	94.7	29	78.9	19	100			19	100	15	78.9	6
7 Loti	9328	34	30	82.2	22	85.3	33	97.1			27	79.4	26	76.5	7
8 Xiluva	9552	67	63	94	29	85	67	100			64	95.5	49	73	8
9 Chacha	9552	36	32	88.8	60	80.5	35	97.2			34	94.4	27	72.2	9
10 Zambezi	9482	31	28	98	24	90	5	100	25	96	29	97	22	71	10
11 Chobe	9062	37	30	81.1	29	78.4	37	100			29	78.4	26	70.3	11
12 Mukuti	9437	79	68	86	60	76	79	100			69	87	54	68.4	12
13 Mwita	9539	33	30	91	24	73	33	100			31	94	22	66.7	13
14 Munyaka	9112	42	33	78.6	29	69	40	95.2			38	90.5	28	66.7	14
15 Impala	9660	18	15	83.3	13	72.2	18	100			17	94.4	12	66.7	15
16 Masasa	9184	85	69	81	57	67	83	98			74	82	54	63.5	16
17 Khotso	9349	85	70	82.4	61	71.8	52	94.5	27	90	65	76.5	54	63.5	17
18 RRA	9666	38	31	81.5	29	76.3	37	97.3			33	86.8	24	63	18
19 Ndate	9551	72	53	73.6	51	70.8	66	91.6			56	77.7	45	62.5	19
20 Dumela	9031	74	53	71.6	55	74.3	70	94.5			59	79.5	46	62.2	20
21 Chilongozi	9100	58	47	81	42	72.4	53	91.4			46	79.3	36	62.1	21
22 Kutsaka	9547	72	52	72.2	54	76.1	69	98.6			64	90.1	44	61.1	22
23 Kachepe	9314	82	66	80.5	57	69.5	79	97.5			69	84.1	50	61	23
24 Yebo	9519	38	26	68	27	70	37	97.4			30	79	23	61	24
25 Chambo	9531	66	55	83.3	49	74.3	65	98.5			57	86.4	40	60.6	25