

How to...adapt the style of your report

Each report you write has a specific intended audience. This will dictate the style and content of the report. It is becoming more common in the NHS for all reports and letters to be copied to client/carers. For a comprehensive list of report content and general style guidelines see [How to...write a report](#).

It is important to think carefully about how the report will be read by the person who receives it. This is equally so for parents and carers who may not have read a formal report before and may have little knowledge or understanding of communication disorders; as it is for doctors who have limited time to read the report and want to know very specific information.

Reports are not letters.

Writing for speech and language therapists

1. Give appropriate background information
2. Give sufficient detail about therapy so that they know what you have done
3. Put assessment results in an appendix with detail of all scores and dates
4. Refer to the appendix in the text when you analyse/describe outcomes of assessments
5. When making recommendations make it clear what you have taken forward and what you are suggesting is appropriate for the future

Writing for other Health professionals

1. Always maintain a professional tone
2. Remember that they may not know all of our jargon and be respectful, not condescending
3. Be concise, but not at the expense of important details (*why* does the professional need to know what you are telling them?) aim for one side
4. Explain needs and **request** an opinion (do not tell them what to do!)
5. Request copies of their reports
6. Provide contact name and number for further information
7. Make outcome/next step clear

Writing for teachers

1. Don't use jargon or if you can't avoid it, explain it (teachers may use different terminology)
2. Clearly section your report so that it is easy to skim through
3. Link with National curriculum where possible
4. Link with National Literacy Strategy where possible
5. Outlines aims (if appropriate) showing collaboration intent
6. Be professional

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7. Give a contact name and number for further information/support
8. Give detailed instructions with materials if you require work to be carried out in school
9. Make sure your expectations are realistic. Remember the child may be different in class/group compared to 1:1 in session

Writing for parents

1. Don't use jargon or if you can't avoid it, explain it
2. Portray empathy (show you understand the importance/impact of the information you are giving them)
3. Include strengths and weaknesses
4. Give examples e.g. 'pronouns e.g. *he, his, her*', 'omits final sounds e.g. *bus*→*bu*, *house*→*how*'
5. Do not use phonetic transcription, use orthographic equivalents and give examples e.g. 'th- as in thin'
6. Be careful how you give standardised assessment information:
 - you may want to put an appendix of test results in a table, rather than include them all in the body of the report
 - explain what assessments test
 - only give age equivalents if it is helpful and appropriate e.g. reading ages
 - generally percentiles or standard scores are more widely used
 - describe where the child has scored in relation to the average range (either %ile or SS) e.g. '...scored at the 16th percentile which is at the low end of the average range...'
7. Make a statement about who parent can contact if they want to discuss report further or have future concerns
8. Try to make discussion time to go through report with parent
9. Give detailed instructions with materials if you require work to be carried out at home
10. Make sure your expectations are realistic