

Tips on Report Writing

New to report writing? Look at the following example and tips before writing your own report for your assignment on housing for dogs.

First: Be clear about what a report is.

A report is a piece of factual, concise writing, usually on a single subject or topic area. Reports are often used to provide information to someone in a more senior position than the report writer, to make a decision, and this person may not have a lot of time. The report writer is usually given clear 'terms of reference' or instructions about what areas to investigate and report on, and needs to stick to this. The structure and length of reports can vary, but the reader needs to be able to skim or scan the report quickly and easily. Formatting features such as bold, bullet points and spacing help with this.

Second: Be clear about what needs to be included in the report.

Take time to read the instructions thoroughly. Highlight the key words and make notes before you begin. This will ensure your report covers everything you need to.

The report writing instructions from the assessment are below in black.

Title:

Kennel Facilities/Domestic Housing Report

Firstly, identify the **key words** (ie important words) in the instructions to find out what you need to cover in the report. These key words may be used as headings or sub-headings in your report. By using the key words as headings, you know that the main points will be covered, and it helps to keep you on the right track. Key words are shown in **bold** in the example below.

Kennel Facilities/Domestic Housing Report *PC 6.1, 6.2*

- a. You have been tasked to **design ideal housing** for **two pet Labradors** at a **residential** property. The dogs need to be housed **outside** when the owners are at work and they need to be **confined**.
- b. You have been tasked to **design a commercial boarding kennel facility**, to house **10 small dogs** and **10 large dogs** at any one time.

Pay attention to the instructions – there is a word limit for this report - below you are asked to write **no less than 500** words but **no more than 800**. There is no point in writing reams of information – it is unnecessary and may mean your work will be sent back to you unmarked. Note that we are still picking out the key words in bold to help us plan our report.

For each of these scenarios, produce a **short report (500 – 800 words)** detailing **features of ideal housing** for these dogs. You **may include diagrams or pictures** to help supplement your design. If you choose to use drawings or diagrams, these can either: be scanned and submitted with this report or take a digital photo of the drawing and insert it into this section of the report.

Note: above it says you **may include** diagrams or pictures – so this is optional. You do not have to use them. You may find it helpful to use diagrams if you are a visual learner, or find it easier to draw what you mean. Once you have read through the instructions, you might like to start by drawing your kennel design first, and then using it to help you describe it in your report.

The housing you design **must comply** with the relevant **National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC) code** (available on Moodle).

Note: Above it says **you must comply** with the relevant NAWAC Code. So this is not an option! You will need to find out which of the Codes of Welfare would apply to this type of animal facility. You can look at the list of Codes of Welfare or the Minimum Standards and Recommendations for Best Practice on the Ministry of Agriculture website. There is a Code of Welfare for Dogs, and also a Code for the Minimum Standards and Recommendations for Best Practice for Animals in Boarding Establishment.

Your first design is for dogs in a residential property – so this would be covered under the Code of Welfare for Dogs. Your second design is for a commercial boarding kennels so this will be covered under BOTH the Code of Welfare for Dogs and also the Code of Welfare and Minimum Standards and Recommendations Best Practice for Animals in Boarding Establishment. You do not need to read the Codes thoroughly, but you will need to look in particular at the sections in the Codes on Housing, to make sure your kennel design meets (or exceeds) the standards for housing given there.

You must comment on all of the following:

1. How the housing meets the dog's needs for **shelter and mental well-being**
2. Suitable **materials, size, and safety features**
3. Considerations around **sustainability** - write **a paragraph** about the **sustainable features** of your designs for the housing of the dogs in the above two scenarios. This paragraph should include **at least THREE (3) ideas** on **sustainability** of the design and management features of your housing and **at least ONE (1) challenge** faced.

There is lots of important information here! Use each of the points listed to make a heading – so that you can be sure you have covered everything necessary.

Note in point three you are told how many ideas you need to give on sustainability – three on the sustainability of the designs and at least one idea on challenges that may be faced in trying to design a sustainable kennel or boarding facility.

Examples

Look at the following examples to see how a student has identified the key words in an assignment on ideal rabbit housing. Then study the two examples of reports

Instructions:

a. You have been tasked to **design ideal housing** for **two pet rabbits at a residential property**.

Produce a **short report (500 – 800 words)** detailing **features of ideal housing** for the rabbits. You **may include diagrams or pictures** to help supplement your design. If you choose to use drawings or diagrams, these can either: be scanned and submitted with this report or take a digital photo of the drawing and insert it into this section of the report.

The housing you design **must comply with the relevant National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee code** (available on Moodle).

You must comment on all of the following:

1. How the housing meets the rabbits' needs for **shelter and mental well-being**
2. **Suitable materials, size, and safety features**
3. Considerations around **sustainability** - write a **paragraph about the sustainable features of your designs** for the housing of the rabbits in the above scenarios. This paragraph should include at least **THREE (3) ideas on sustainability of the design and management features of your housing and at least ONE (1) challenge faced.**

Note below that the student has begun by clearly stating the title of the report

A. Report on features of ideal housing for two rabbits at a residential property

The following features need to be considered, when designing housing for rabbits:

- Physical well-being: Space and Shelter
- Mental well-being
- Materials
- Size
- Safety features
- Sustainability

This student has then used each of the points above to begin a new heading, and write about that particular feature. This gives a methodical approach and ensures that important information is not missed out.

Space: Rabbits need plenty of room to hop around and stand up tall. Ideally, the height of the hutch should allow the rabbits to stretch up fully when standing on their hind legs.

The SPCA recommends that a rabbit hutch should be a minimum of 1.5m (length) x 0.8m (width) x

0.60m (height). Many hutches for sale in pet shops are too small, according to the SPCA.

The closed in part of the hutch, or 'sleeping box' should have sufficient space for the two rabbits to retreat and feel secure. The rabbits should be able to sit without their ears touching the top. This section of the hutch should be water and draught proof.

Shelter: Ideally, the hutch should be positioned so that it faces the morning sun, but the rabbits must have access to shade during the hot summer as they overheat quickly and should be protected from the rain and wind during the winter.

The optimum temperature range for rabbits is 18-28 C.

Bedding in the closed area should be sufficient to provide good insulation and warmth.

Materials: The run should have strong mesh sides to allow air and light to enter. It should also have a mesh floor as most rabbits like to dig and can tunnel out and other predators such as ferrets can tunnel in. The hutch should be slightly raised off the ground.

The closed section of the hutch may be made out of wood, however, rabbits like to chew, so an eye should be kept on the hutch to ensure it is not chewed through anywhere.

Bedding in the closed part of the hutch should provide the rabbits with warmth, insulation and a place to hide. The best bedding is straw, hay or shredded paper atop a layer of newspaper, approximately 5cms in depth. Wood shavings can be used, but only if you are absolutely sure they have not been treated and they are not heavily scented. Treated timber or fibre bedding can be fatal if the rabbit ingests them.

Mental well being: Rabbits require plenty of exercise and, in addition to a roomy run, they need to be able to have supervised time running around the backyard or in a large exercise pen with shelter from the weather.

Include features such as ramps, tunnels, boxes and 'toys', such as safe objects to chew on, to provide mental stimulation.

The closed part of the hutch should allow the rabbits to feel warm and secure.

Safety features and security: The Code of Recommendations 'states that 'cages must be secure to prevent escape into the wild'. There should be a latch on the door and a lock, if there is any danger that young children may open the hutch and inadvertently allow the rabbits to escape.

Strong mesh on the sides and bottom of the run are required to prevent predators getting in, or the rabbits tunnelling out.

The hutch should be strongly built so that dogs cannot get in.

The hutch design should allow it to be easily cleaned and disinfected. It should also be easy to handle.

Rabbits can be kept indoors, but will still need a safe place to sleep at night and must be supervised when they are loose in the house. Rabbits love to chew so you must ensure they are not able to get to electrical cords or potted plants.

Sustainability on the design and management features of housing:

There are a number of ways you can follow sustainability principles when designing and managing

the rabbits' housing. Firstly, try to 'reduce' consumption by 'reusing' - look for a second-hand hutch on 'Trade Me' or through 'Freecycle', rather than buying one new. Secondly, when managing the rabbits' housing, reuse old newspapers or untreated wood shavings as bedding, to supplement straw. These are all organic material, so used bedding from the rabbits' housing can be 'recycled' - added to the compost heap, and later returned to the garden to enrich the soil. You could also 'reuse' bits of unwanted pipe to provide tunnels/ play features, rather than purchasing 'toys'.

One challenge for sustainability: Second hand wooden hutches may harbour diseases or parasites, so if you are buying a second hand wooden hutch it should be in good condition and disinfected thoroughly prior to placing the rabbit in it.

Example Two:

Example of same report with different layout features: here you can see that this student has formatted each piece of information in a bullet point. This is a good format for a report as it keeps the writing concise and white space and bullet points makes the writing easy to skim and scan. (This type of formatting would not be suitable for a descriptive piece of writing where full descriptive sentences and paragraphs are used).

(A) Report on features of ideal housing for two rabbits at a residential property

Part One of the Animal Welfare Act (1999)

(a) requires owners of animals, and persons in charge of animals, to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the physical, health, and behavioural needs of the animals are met in accordance with both—

- (i) good practice; and
- (ii) scientific knowledge

Therefore, the following features need to be considered, when considering housing for rabbits:

- Physical well-being: Space; Shelter
- Mental well-being
- Materials
- Size
- Safety features
- Sustainability

Space:

- Rabbits need plenty of room to hop around and stand up tall.
- Hutch should be a minimum of 1.5m (length) x 0.8m (width) x 0.60m (height)
- Many hutches for sale in pet shops are too small, according to the SPCA
- Height of hutch should allow the rabbits to stretch up fully when standing on their hind legs.

Closed in part of the hutch, or 'sleeping box'

- Sufficient space for the two rabbits to retreat and feel secure
- The rabbits should be able to sit without their ears touching the top
- water and draft proof.

Shelter:

- Hutch should be positioned so that it faces the morning sun, but the rabbits must have access to shade during the hot summer
- Rabbits should be protected from the rain and wind during the winter
- The optimum temperature range for rabbits is 18-28 C.
- Bedding in the closed area should be sufficient to provide good insulation and warmth.

Materials:

Run should have:

- Strong mesh sides to allow air and light to enter
 - Mesh floor to prevent rabbits tunnelling out and other predators such as ferrets tunnelling in.
- The hutch should be slightly raised off the ground.

Closed section of the hutch may be made out of wood, however, rabbits like to chew, so an eye should be kept on the hutch to ensure it is not chewed through anywhere.

Bedding in the closed part of the hutch should provide the rabbits with warmth, insulation and a place to hide.

- Use straw, hay or shredded paper atop a layer of newspaper, approximately 5cms in depth.
- Wood shavings can be used, but only if you are absolutely sure they have not been treated and they are not heavily scented. Treated timber or fibre bedding can be fatal if the rabbit ingests them.

Mental well being:

Rabbits require plenty of exercise, so need:

- a roomy run to be able to have supervised time running around the backyard or in a large exercise pen with shelter from the weather
- features such as ramps, tunnels, boxes and 'toys', such as safe objects to chew on, for mental stimulation.

Safety features and security:

- Latch on the door and a lock, if there is any danger that young children may open the hutch and inadvertently allow the rabbits to escape.
- Strong mesh on the sides and bottom of the run are required to prevent predators getting in, or the rabbits tunnelling out.
- Design allows it to be easily cleaned, disinfected, and easy to handle.

Rabbits can be kept indoors, but will still need:

- a safe place to sleep at night
- to be supervised when they are loose in the house
- no access to electrical cords or potted plants.

Sustainability on the design and management features of housing:

- Try to 'reduce' consumption by 'reusing' - look for a second-hand hutch on 'Trade Me' or through 'Freecycle', rather than buying one new
- When managing the rabbits' housing, reuse old newspapers or untreated wood shavings as bedding, to supplement straw. These are all organic material, so used bedding from the rabbits' housing can be 'recycled' - added to the compost heap, and later returned to the garden to enrich the soil
- Reuse bits of unwanted pipe to provide tunnels/ play features, rather than purchasing 'toys'.

One challenge of sustainability of the design:

Wooden hutches made from sustainable woods are warm and natural, however they are not easy to clean. This may not be a problem if the hutch is to house one or two rabbits in a residential setting but would be unsuitable for a breeding colony or commercial environment.