

Writing your document

1. Plan well

- ✓ Whatever kind of document you're working on, the first thing to do is think about why you're writing it. What is the purpose? What are you trying to achieve? Being clear about these things up front will help you maintain your focus throughout.
- ✓ Different people plan their text in different ways. You could create a skeleton structure of the headings or main themes, with some bullet points or ideas under each one. You could begin with sketching out the ideas and then arranging them into a structure. Whichever method you use at this stage, it should save you time and effort later down the line.

2. Write well

- ✓ Think about your audience and how they will receive your document. Use language that they will understand and be clear about your ideas.
- ✓ Be careful with your spelling and grammar. A well-written document will be much more easily understood and will come across as more professional.
- ✓ Structure your document with appropriate headings and paragraph breaks. Make sure key messages are not lost in a sea of text.
- ✓ Begin well and end well. These are the bits that readers will remember most clearly. Start with an introductory paragraph outlining the purpose of your document. End with a summary of what you have written, with a conclusion and recommendations if appropriate.

3. Check well

- ✓ Read through your document. Ask someone else to read it, and engage a professional proofreader if you can. Did the document achieve its intended purpose? Take a look at my *Proofreading your work* download for further tips on checking your document.