



# The Natural World

Report: reviewing a school nature trail

## 1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you write.

1. What can students learn from observing nature near school?
2. How can an outdoor trail make learning more interesting?
3. What problems might happen during an outdoor learning activity?

### Exercise 6 at a glance

Write a formal or semi-formal report.  
Use a clear title and subheadings.  
Cover the task fully.  
Develop ideas with details and examples.  
Make practical recommendations.

## 2. Exam-style task

Your Head of Geography has asked for a report about a new school nature trail. Write a report for the Head of Geography about the trail.

**In your report, you should describe what students learnt from the trail, mention any problems using the trail, and suggest how the nature trail could be improved.**

Here are some comments from students to help you:

*'The pond area made the lesson more active.'*

*'I learnt to identify local plant species.'*

*'Some paths became muddy after rain.'*

**Write about 120 to 160 words.**

## 3. Model report

### Report on the School Nature Trail

#### Introduction

This report reviews the new school nature trail used by Year 9 students this term. It describes what students learnt, mentions problems using the trail and suggests improvements for future outdoor lessons.

#### What students learnt

Students learnt to identify several local plant species and observe how insects use different habitats. The pond area was particularly useful because students could compare shaded and sunny areas and record differences in wildlife. This made the lesson feel more active than a classroom task.

#### Problems using the trail

The main problem was that some paths became muddy after rain, which made movement difficult for students carrying notebooks. A few information signs were also hard to read because they had been placed too far from the path.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that wood chips be added to the wettest sections of the trail. The information signs should also be moved closer to the path so that students can read them without damaging the plants nearby.

## 4. Explore the model: structure, content and register

Work with the model report. Underline, label or make short notes.

Focus	What to find	Done?
Report structure	Find the title, introduction, main sections and recommendations.	
Content point 1	Where does the writer show what students learnt by observing nature?	
Content point 2	Where does the writer develop a point with a specific outdoor example?	
Content point 3	Where does the writer explain how conditions affected students' use of the trail?	
Audience and register	Where does the writer suggest improvements that protect both access and plants?	
Development	Find one extra detail, example or effect that improves the answer.	

## 5. Language from the task prompts

The task prompts can guide your grammar and content choices. Notice which language each prompt naturally needs.

Prompt	Useful grammar	Why it fits	Example from the model
student learning	infinitives + observation language	You are explaining skills students developed outdoors.	learnt to identify... / observe how...
problems	cause/effect language + past perfect passive	You need to explain why the trail was difficult to use.	because they had been placed...
improvements	passive recommendations + so that	You are making practical suggestions and explaining the benefit.	It is recommended that... / so that students can...

## 6. Make it formal and organised

Notice how report phrases organise the response. Underline one useful report move for each purpose.

Job	Useful report phrases
state the purpose	This report reviews... / describes... / suggests improvements...
describe learning	Students learnt to... / was particularly useful because...
show outdoor difficulty	The main problem was... / A few information signs were also...
protect access and nature	It is recommended that... / should also be moved so that...

## 7. Vocabulary and useful report phrases

Use chunks that sound natural for this task. You can also upgrade your writing with precise words and phrases.

Purpose	Useful chunks / language	Add your own
describe the trail	school nature trail / local plant species insects / different habitats / pond area	
describe learning	observe wildlife / compare shaded and sunny areas record differences / active lesson	
describe problems	muddy paths / carrying notebooks information signs / too far from the path	
make recommendations	wood chips / wettest sections signs moved closer / damaging plants	
use precise report wording	species / habitats / outdoor lessons movement / information signs	

## 8. Plan your own report

Use the same task, or change the details to another nature trail, wildlife project or outdoor learning activity.

Prompt	My idea	Useful language
opening		
what students learnt		
problems using the trail		
recommendations		

