

STUDENT HANDOUT: WRITING REPORTS

Scientific reports are **factual** and therefore must not include thoughts or conjecture.

Here are a few strategies for report-writing:

Be factual

Be concise

Use bullet points

Always label diagrams and drawings

Include a key where appropriate

use subject-specific vocabulary

use accurate spelling

Leave two lines between paragraphs

Keep to the point - don't waffle

Introduction

- Background information
- Prediction/hypothesis: what are you hoping to prove/disprove?
- State the variables affecting the results
- Rationale: reason for undertaking the study
- Aims and objectives: what do you want to find out?
- You may have a research question/s
- Context: environmental and/or legislative
- Known drawbacks of the study

Materials/apparatus

- This section is usually separate for a **scientific report** but is often incorporated into the **method** for other reports
- Draw, list or describe the apparatus and materials used
- Sample size

• Method

- Write specifically what you did
- Write methodically in a step-by-step fashion
- How was the investigation controlled?
- Why did you choose this methodology?

• Results

- What did you measure and what were the results
- Use tables and diagrams here to show your data

• Discussion

- Explain the results and interpret what they mean
- Compare results with known research
- Discuss the drawbacks of the investigation/research methods
- Discuss how your findings related to your predictions/hypothesis: did the data reflect what you were expecting?
- Discuss how your findings relate to what is known from research/literature to happen
- Comment upon known scientific models

• Conclusion

- Summarise the investigation, your predictions, your method, your results and whether you were able to make any firm conclusions
- What do your findings indicate?
- What could you do to follow-up the test?
- Suggest **improvements** and **drawbacks** to the study
- Was your prediction/hypothesis accurate
- Explain any inaccuracies?
- Refer to original research question and hypothesis/ese

Remember:

For reports you must be objective and only give **facts**.



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