Report Writing: a science report

1 Title: clear and precise

2 Introduction: context of the inquiry. Key related research in the field
   - Why did you undertake this particular inquiry?

3 Aim: a brief statement of what exactly you were aiming to find out or achieve in the inquiry

4 Method: what you did - a clear, concise account of what you actually did to carry out the research
   - how exactly the experiment or inquiry was set up or carried out
   - why you did it this way
   - how your methods relate to your aims
   - consider using numbered subheadings

5 Results: your findings/data
   - how you processed your results
   - clear presentation of your results in words
   - straightforward presentation of your processed data in graphs/charts
     (raw data is in the appendix or lab diary)
   - integrate your data and comment
   - use numbered subheadings

6 Discussion of results
   - point out patterns and trends
   - relate results to each other
   - relate results to title and aims
   - critical assessment of methods used. How what you did may have affected outcomes. What improvements in methods can you suggest?
   - What were the limitations of your study?

7 Conclusions: key points you take away from the investigation.
   - Stick to what the data shows, even if this seems very modest
   - State your conclusions clearly and do not enter into more discussion
   - Don’t add anything that was not in the Discussion section

8 Appendix
   - Working tools (eg questionnaire, lab diary)
   - Summary of raw data (in tally or table form)
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Style and language in a science report
Traditionally, science reports are written

- in the past tense (what you did, not what you plan to do or are doing)
- in the passive voice, and avoid person pronouns (not ‘I’ or ‘we’)
  So you write: ‘The glider was placed on ….’
  NOT ‘I placed the glider on …’ or ‘We placed the glider on…’

This is changing – some tutors and scientists now accept the use of ‘I’ or ‘we’
because it makes it clearer to see exactly what you did.

There are a few phases guaranteed to annoy your reader: ‘Graph to show …’
(of course it does! Just put what it does show!) an experiment to prove ….; our aim has
been proved ….’ And setting out specific predictions or hypotheses. DON’T!

Titles for tables and figures
There are some conventions about this:

- Put the title of a table ABOVE the table
- Put the title of a graph or chart BELOW the data
- Number tables and charts separately ie Table 1, Table 2 etc, Figure 1, Figure 2 etc.

Your report could have data in this sort of order: Table 1, Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Table 2 etc.