

UPGRADE STUDY ADVICE

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 phrases 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.