

Scientific Reports

Tips for Success

What is a Scientific Report?

Scientific reports aim to provide a clear and structured outline of a particular study or experiment. Scientific reports provide the ideal opportunity for you to articulate your observations and understanding. They are also a way to demonstrate the importance of your findings and their value to the wider scientific community.

Steps to drafting a Scientific Report

1: Understand the '**big picture.**' Ask yourself the following questions:

- What were the **main aims/expectations** of the study?
- What **methods** were used? How do the methods support the aims?
- What were the **findings**?
- Why would we **benefit** from this knowledge?

2: Understand your **data**

- Explore the **process** involved in collecting the data.
- Understand **what the data is telling you.**

3: Create an **outline** of the report

- **Jot down notes** using headings.
- Make sure the links between each section are **clear and logical.**

4: **Write** your report

- Usually this is done in a **linear** way, starting with the introduction.
- **Use headings.**
- Ensure clear sentence and paragraph structures.
- Take the time to **edit.**

What does a Scientific Report include?

Scientific reports can vary in format and length. It is important to always read through the expectations of each assessment in your unit guide. Most scientific reports follow a similar format which includes an introduction, methods, results and discussion (IMRD) section. The table below can be used as a guide.

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Section	Purpose
Title	Provides a statement of the study's overall purpose
Abstract	Briefly summarises the study/experiment by presenting key information including results and outcomes of the IMRD
Introduction	State the purpose of the study/experiment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing a literature review on current theory • stating the aims of the study and the research questions OR stating the hypothesis (predictions) of the experiment • linking the theories discussed in the literature review to the aims/research questions/hypothesis
Method	Describes the actual procedure by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing the set-up and materials used, participant information and how the data is collected • outlining the steps taken to conduct the study
Results and analysis	Presents and analyses the main data collected, often with tables and figures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables should be labelled numerically as Table 1, Table 2, etc... • Everything else is labelled numerically as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc... • Include a title for every figure or table. Refer to the referencing style guides on where to place titles
Discussion	Explains and interprets the results by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • commenting on the results • identifying trends • comparing results with prediction • identifying limitations
Conclusion	Provides a final summary of the key points drawn from the results and discussion sections by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restating the aims of the study • answering the research questions • summarising the contributions the study has made
References	Indicates both in-text and end text citations (often used most heavily in the introduction). Check your unit guide of the referencing style expected.
Appendices	Includes any extra materials, raw data and content too large to include in the report. It is not always required.

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