COMMON ERRORS IN LAB REPORTS

Following are some general comments on the students’ reports, errors which are commonly made, and comments about them in italics:

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

1. Use the same font throughout your report. Different fonts may be used to highlight something, e.g. if italics or bold are used for some words, but the text should remain in the same font.
2. The headings should all have the same font.
3. Use spell-check to remove errors of spelling and grammar.
4. The text should be left justified, or both left and right justified, but should not be center or right justified.
5. Line spacing though-out the report should be consistent.
6. **Never** leave a space before a period or a comma, and **always** leave a space after a period or comma.
7. Nice if the headings are numbered (then use numbering also this in the Table of Contents).
8. In general, the presentation should be appealing.

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| **COMMON ERRORS** | **COMMENTS** |
| **TABLE OF CONTENTS** | |
| Items names do no match the headings in the text. | *They must be identical.* |
| Page numbers mentioned is a range of page numbers. | *Give only starting numbers.* |
| Pages in the text are not numbered. | *Must be numbered, and must match the numbers in this table.* |
| The column having page numbers is not aligned properly. | *Should be justified or use tabs.* |
| Font is bold throughout. | *No need for this.* |
| **LIST OF EQUIPMENT** | |
| The list of equipment is taken from the manual, even though you did not use all of the equipment, or you used something else. | *Give the list of equipment that you actually used, not what is in the manual.* |
| The list is spread out over a large area. | *Try to be compact and ordered.* |
| **THEORY** | |
| Notation used in the Equations is not explained. | *Write what the symbols stand for. May also add units for the symbols.* |
| The powers are written as, e.g. x^2. | *Use the tool in your text editor (usually MSWORD) to write the exponents as, e.g. x2.* |
| **COMMON ERRORS** | **COMMENTS** |
| The notation in text and in equations is different. | *The font etc should be identical to what is written in the equation.* |
| Theory is written too short or too long. | *It should cover about half a page.* |
| Theory is taken from the manual. | *The manual has more details. You need to summarize it in your words.* |
| **PROCEDURE** | |
| You are telling the reader to do the experiment. | *You have done the experiment so tell the reader what you have done. Don’t tell the reader to do the measurements or anything else.* |
| Procedure is copied or modified from the manual. | *Write in your own words, Add anything that you also did, and remove what you did not do.* |
| **DATA AND CALCULATIONS** | |
| Units are not written | *Must have units for all data and calculated items.* |
| Units are written at top of column, and also in front of each value | *If you have the units at the top of the column, do not repeat in every item in that column. It is preferable to write units at the top of the column.* |
| Calculations are scribbled on the data page. | *Do them neatly on same or next page.* |
| Graphs are made by freehand drawing. | *If you need the slope from the graph, it must be drawn to scale, means you need a graph paper to do that. If the line fits a straight line, draw one with a ruler, not freehand. See manual on error analysis on how to make the graph.* |
| **RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS** | |
| Table of results is the same as the table of data. | *Data is what you have measured. In the results give the final results of the calculations and the errors, not the details.* |
| Conclusions state: “the experiment was successful”, or: “the objectives were achieved”. | *Write the results obtained and discuss whether they represent the objectives, how close they are to the expected actual, what are the errors, the causes of the errors, and the improvements that can be made.* |