

Style 5 Report

The report format depends on the type of report and the requirements of the assignment. While reports can use their own unique structure, most follow this basic template:

- **Executive summary:** Just like an [abstract](#) in an academic paper, an executive summary is a standalone section that summarizes the findings in your report so readers know what to expect. These are mostly for official reports and less so for school reports.
- **Introduction:** Setting up the body of the report, your [introduction](#) explains the overall topic that you're about to discuss, with your thesis statement and any need-to-know background information before you get into your own findings.
- **Body:** The body of the report explains all your major discoveries, broken up into headings and subheadings. The body makes up the majority of the entire report; whereas the introduction and conclusion are just a few paragraphs each, the body can go on for pages.
- **Conclusion:** The [conclusion](#) is where you bring together all the information in your report and come to a definitive interpretation or judgment. This is usually where the author inputs their own personal opinions or inferences.

If you're familiar with [how to write a research paper](#), you'll notice that report writing follows the same introduction-body-conclusion structure, sometimes adding an executive summary. Reports usually have their own additional

requirements as well, such as title pages and tables of content, which we explain in the next section.

What should be included in a report?

There are no firm requirements for what's included in a report. Every school, company, laboratory, task manager, and teacher can make their own format, depending on their unique needs. In general, though, be on the lookout for these particular requirements—they tend to crop up a lot:

- **Title page:** Official reports often use a title page to keep things organized; if a person has to read multiple reports, title pages make them easier to keep track of.
- **Table of contents:** Just like in books, the table of contents helps readers go directly to the section they're interested in, allowing for faster browsing.
- **Page numbering:** A common courtesy if you're writing a longer report, page numbering makes sure the pages are in order in the case of mix-ups or misprints.
- **Headings and subheadings:** Reports are typically broken up into sections, divided by headings and subheadings, to facilitate browsing and scanning.
- **Citations:** If you're citing information from another source, the citations guidelines tell you the recommended format.
- **Works cited page:** A bibliography at the end of the report lists credits and the legal information for the other sources you got information from.

As always, refer to the assignment for the specific guidelines on each of these. The people who read the report should tell you which [style guides](#) or formatting they require.