

Writing a Research Report

The goal of a research report is to write clearly and concisely about your research topic so that the reader can easily understand the purpose and results of your research.

Structure

A report is typically made up of three main parts: (1) preliminary material, (2) body and (3) supplementary material. Each section contains a different kind of content. Refer to the table below:

Broad Divisions	Individual Sections
(1) Preliminary material	Title of Report
	Table of Contents (not always required)
	Abstract/Synopsis
(2) Body of report	Introduction
	Literature Review (sometimes included in the Introduction)
	Methodology
	Results
	Discussion
	Conclusion
(3) Supplementary material	References or Bibliography
	Appendices

Parts

Introduction - The purpose of your report. The project statement will be useful here. Background information may include a brief review of the literature already available on the topic so that you are able to 'place' your research in the field. Some brief details of your methods and an outline of the structure of the report.

Literature Review - If asked to do a separate literature review, you must carefully structure your findings. It may be useful to do a chronological format where you discuss from the earliest to the latest research, placing your research appropriately in the chronology. Alternately, you could write in a thematic way, outlining the various themes that you discovered in the research regarding the topic.

Again, you will need to state where your research fits. If this part is not relevant to you, just summarize the papers given by your mentor.

Methodology - Here you clearly outline what methodology you used in your research i.e. what you did and how you did it. It must be clearly written so that it would be easy for another researcher to duplicate your research if they wished to.

- It is usually written in a 'passive' voice.
- Clearly reference any material you have used from other sources. Clearly label and number any diagrams, charts, and graphs. Ensure that they are relevant to the research and add substance to the text rather than just duplicating what you have said.

Results & Discussion - This is where you indicate what you found in your research. Then, you discuss the relevance of your results and how your findings fit with other research in the area. It will relate back to your literature review and your introductory statement.

Conclusion - This is a summary of the most significant results/findings. You should not include any new material in this section. Sometimes you could indicate some areas where your research has limits or where further research would be useful.

References or Bibliography - This includes all references used in your report or referred to for background information. This must be done using Bibtex.

Appendices - These should add extra information to the report. If you include appendices they must be referred to in the body of the report and must have a clear purpose for being included. Each appendix must be named and numbered.