

Module: Smart Research Report Overview - Summary

No.	Topic	Contents		
			Essay	Report
1.	Differences between an Essay and a Report	Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple structure without distinct headings usually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal structure with distinct headings and sub-headings
		Topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually a question or proposition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often a problem or case study Hypothesis or problem statement is stated
		Approach and Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argumentative approach Author attempts to persuade and make a stand Uses a subjective and personal voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigative and analytical approach Author attempts to prove a hypothesis, solve the problem statement and make recommendations Uses an objective and authoritative voice
		Supporting Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arguments supported with information from various sources including personal experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main points supported with quantitative and/or qualitative data from primary and secondary research
		Assessment	Success depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How convincing and persuasive the argument is Connection between points and how well the proposition is established 	Success depends on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research skills Analysis and presentation of findings Conclusions made

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2.	Structure of a Research Report	Section	Key features
		Cover page	Includes the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of report Names of group members Class/Course Submission date
		Table of contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists the main sections of the report and the page numbers
		Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines the background, scope and purpose Defines terms and limits of the research
		Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes what other researchers have written about the topic
		Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the research methods used and how the data was collected
		Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the findings or results Uses tables, graphs or charts with accompanying explanation Presents facts only – interpretation to be done in the Discussion section
		Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interprets and evaluates the findings Analyses findings in relation to other research
		Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents the major inferences made based on the findings and how they relate to your research topic
		Bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lists all materials referred to and cited in the report
		Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes relevant detailed information or documents, e.g. surveys, questionnaires, etc.
3.	How to Write your Research Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write the Research Methods section first as it is the easiest to write. Write the Bibliography section last but remember to compile your resources throughout your research process. Arrange your main points so that they flow logically. For example, you should place the background information first, before explaining the purpose of your report. Consider what your audience needs to know, what your reader already knows, and what the reader expects to see in your report. Keep sentences short and use simple language to convey your information meaningfully. Avoid the use of contractions (e.g. “doesn’t,” or “couldn’t”), technical jargon, clichés and slang. 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record your sources. Acknowledge information you have indirectly or directly referenced through in-text citations and in the bibliography. Proofread your report to check for mistakes when you are done. It helps if you read it aloud, and get a friend to help proofread your report. For more tips on formal writing, refer to: http://homepages.inf.ed.ac.uk/jbednar/writingtips.html
4.	What Makes a Good Research Report?	<p>A good research report should have CLASS, which stands for:</p> <p>Clarity: A good report is easy to read and comprehend. Check if you have done the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose (e.g. your problem statement) is clearly stated. Simple language is used. Sentences are short. No contractions are used. Abbreviations or technical terms are explained. <p>Logic Contents are well-organised and structured in sequence using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headings and sub-headings. Section numbering. Bullets. <p>Acknowledgement of sources used You must acknowledge the sources of information that you referred to in your report. This includes publications and personal interviews, if applicable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the resources used are credible, accurate and relevant. List the sources in the bibliography section and use in-text citation. Use an appropriate citation style (e.g. APA, MLA, etc.). <p>Scholarly contents Ensure there is depth in the contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support your conclusion, interpretations and recommendations using facts and research data. Provide a review and critique of research by other researchers on the same topic. <p>Satisfying The greatest satisfaction is achieved if people find your report well-written and informative. Most importantly it should meet your teacher's expectations and you are pleased with your efforts.</p>

Appendix A: Useful Checklists

- **Planning Your Report**

Timeline	Task
Project start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Craft the report outline as you work on the problem<input type="checkbox"/> Gather information<input type="checkbox"/> Assign tasks to team members
2 weeks before deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare the draft report<input type="checkbox"/> Perform critical review and check flow of ideas
1 week before deadline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Full report should be ready<input type="checkbox"/> Have a teacher, or other students provide your group with feedback

- **A Good Research Report**

Characteristics	Details
Clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is the purpose of the report clearly defined?<input type="checkbox"/> Are the explanations easy to understand?
Structured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Are the contents arranged in a systematic manner?<input type="checkbox"/> Are headings, sub-headings, numbering and bullets used to make it easy to read and understand?
Factual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Are facts relevant and accurate?<input type="checkbox"/> Are the conclusion and recommendations based on facts?<input type="checkbox"/> Are personal viewpoints supported by facts?

- **Sections in your Research Report**

Section	Check list
Title page	<p>Does the cover page of your report contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Title of report <input type="checkbox"/> Names of group members <input type="checkbox"/> Class/Course <input type="checkbox"/> Submission date
Table of contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the content of the report listed clearly, with headings and subheadings? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the pages numbered correctly?
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the purpose of the research clearly stated? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the context and background explained? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the problem statement defined? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the important concepts and terms defined? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the limits of the study outlined?
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the materials related to your research question? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you interpret what you have read and discuss it in relation your research? <input type="checkbox"/> Is your interpretation supported by evidence from the source?
Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Is the research process clearly outlined? <input type="checkbox"/> Can it be easily replicated?
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the results clearly summarised or stated? <input type="checkbox"/> Are visual representations of data used where appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the figures clearly labelled? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the figures explained?
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the important findings stated and supported by the results? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the main findings explained and interpreted? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the findings linked to literature cited?
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Are the contents and findings summarised? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the answer to your research question/problem statement stated? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the broader impact of your research stated? <input type="checkbox"/> Are recommendations for possible actions, changes or solutions stated?

Section	Check list
Bibliography	<input type="checkbox"/> Is the format of your citation correct? <input type="checkbox"/> Is the reference list complete?
Appendixes	Are the appendixes: <input type="checkbox"/> relevant to the report? <input type="checkbox"/> clearly labelled? <input type="checkbox"/> necessary?