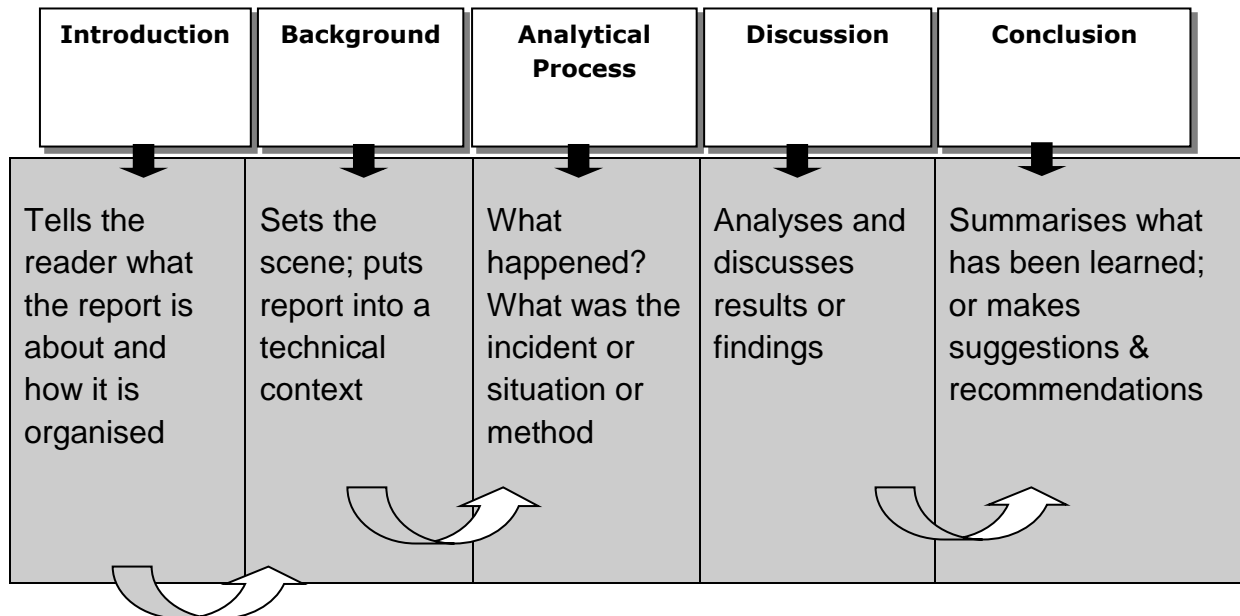# Report Writing
Writing your Undergraduate Project Report

There is a classic report writing structure for writing the main body of all reports:

Introduction	Background	Analytical Process	Discussion	Conclusion
Tells the reader what the report is about and how it is organised	Sets the scene; puts report into a technical context	What happened? What was the incident or situation or method	Analyses and discusses results or findings	Summarises what has been learned; or makes suggestions & recommendations

These broad categories provide a framework for any writer, who can then fit specific sub-headings around them, according to the report they have to write.

Your Project Report

The main part of your report is likely to follow this broad structure, but your sub-headings will reflect the individuality of your own projects. The main body of your report needs to be preceded (introduced) by three separate pages:

1. **A Title page**, which includes title of project; name of student; full name of your course – the degree title; the name(s) of your supervisors(s); and month and year of submission of the report.

2. **Abstract page:** approximately 200 words. This is a summary of what the project is about and the outcome of your work.

3. **Contents page**

The Main Body of Your Project Report

Introduction (Chapter 1)

You should introduce the project to the reader to the project. This can include:

- The aims of the project (keep it brief; you can go into detail later)
- The way the report is structured
- The parameters or boundaries of the project, if relevant (e.g. what you wanted to do; what you couldn't, didn't, or was unable to do). Again, be brief, you can elaborate on this in the following sections.

> The introduction is the **first impression** of you - so make it a good one

Background Sections

It is **not** necessary to have a sub-heading labelled 'Background', but you do need to think what should go into a 'background' section(s) of the report. These can include:

- Why you thought the project was needed; your interest in the project
- Technical and/or social background
- Literature review of previous research/project development in your topic area

The different parts of your broad 'background' section can all be given suitable sub-headings, e.g. 'Aims of the Project' ; Technical Background' ; 'Previous Research' etc

Analytical Process Sections

As above, it is **not** necessary to have a sub-heading labelled 'Analytical Process', but you need to think what should go into an 'analytical process' section(s) of your report. These often include:

- Research aims/questions
- Method/Methodology
- Results/findings

Discussion Sections

In most reports, the discussion sections are really at the **core** of your writing. This is the part you tell the reader what happened and why. It can include:

- An evaluation of the situation – what was expected/unexpected, proved/disproved, illustrated, explored, highlighted by what you have investigated.
- An attempt to explain the results drawing in other research/theory
- A discussion of limitations and possible sources of error
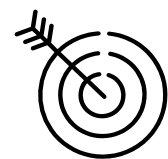
> This section is particularly important for the award of high marks.

Conclusion/Summary/Recommendations

You should end the report with one or two paragraphs that sum up the project and any implications, conclusions or recommendations and suggestions for future research/work you feel would expand the knowledge base in this area.

Don't introduce any new ideas into your conclusion.

References

If you have cited evidence in the main body of your report, this must be referenced in an identifiable referencing style. The author-date (Harvard) referencing style is most commonly used at the University of Bradford; the library has an online or printed guide to Harvard if you are unfamiliar with it. Don't neglect references – you can lose marks if you don't reference your sources properly.

However, you don't need to reference:
- Common knowledge (things that most people would know or easily find out)
- Undisputed historical facts
- Your own opinions, observations, and ideas – but make sure you make it clear in the report that they are **your** views. At those points in the report you can take 'ownership' of them by using the term 'I'; for example, " I would argue that…"; "It is my view that…" etc.

Appendices

Finally, you can include **appendices**, if relevant. This may include:

- Further research/experimental details

- Documentation produced during the process, forms, statements, etc.

- Lengthy tables of data (you can include extracts from these in the body of the main report), transcripts, copies of surveys

- Other information not absolutely necessary in the main body of the text, but which provides additional insights and information to the background, development or discussion stages of the report.

- Support guidelines/documentation/ethical consent etc.

Written by Colin Neville