

20 things to remember when you write reports in Geosciences:

1. We normally hand in reports in .pdf-format, if nothing else is specified. The name of the pdf-file should include your last name + course + report number: E.g.:
Olsen GEO1010 report1.pdf
2. Remember to put your name on the report!! – ideally in the header
3. Include page numbers – ideally in the footer
4. Start your report with an informative title telling the reader what to expect.
5. The structure of your report should normally look like this: 1. Introduction – (2. Data) – 3. Methods – 4. Results (/Analysis) – 5. Discussion (/Analysis) – 6. Conclusion/Summary – 7. References. Some of the sections are not necessary in certain reports, and can be left out.
6. Structure your text. Make sure your message is clear and easily understood by the reader, that each section is built up logically, and that you don't repeat yourself.
7. Read through your report CAREFULLY before you hand in! Look for spelling mistakes and incomplete sentences!! Does it all make sense? Is it easy to read? This is your chance to make the reader/professor/sensor read your report with more "positive" eyes. Most spelling mistakes are unnecessary with the possibilities of spelling and grammar controls and very annoying for the reader.
8. Include citations in the text, and all references used in the report must be listed in the reference list at the end of the report.
9. Figure captions on ALL figures (below figures).
10. Table captions on ALL tables (above tables).
11. Captions are also text – should help to highlight what you want to tell with your figure. The figure/table + caption should explain the message to the reader by themselves.
12. All figures and tables included in the report MUST be referred to and ideally discussed somewhere in the text.
13. If you list numbers in a table or show numbers in a graph, INCLUDE (correct) UNITS!
14. When you present numbers, make sure the number of decimals is chosen according to the data you present. NOT like this: 57,3963200040 NOK (should be 57,40 NOK).
15. Use normal margins in the document.
16. Have few, but GOOD illustrations that you can talk a lot about instead of many bad ones.
17. When you present numbers, a graphical presentation (e.g. histograms, pie charts, line diagram) is often more efficient in communicating the message, compared to a list of numbers. However, sometimes it is useful to highlight numbers, and a table could be more efficient. The message is: THINK about how you present your data for the reader.
18. If you don't know how to make the figure/histogram/pie chart or something else you would like to include there exist tremendous amounts of tutorials for doing stuff in Microsoft Excel and Word, and other software you may use, at YouTube.
19. Take some time to analyze your result, and put your result in a context in the discussion part. You should also make a reality check; is my result realistic? If not – look for calculation errors or logical mistakes – if you can't find one, at least comment upon this! Let the reader know that you're aware that this result is a bit strange.
20. Hand in on time!