Report Writing 3: Writing Style
Have one main point per paragraph

See the Academic Writing guide for more details
Write to express, not to impress - use shorter sentences
Write in the third person - avoid using I e.g. ‘The test was carried out’ not ‘I did the test’
Write words out in full, for instance use ‘could not' instead of ‘couldn’t
Be specific - avoid vague terms like “for some time”. The length of time something took can be important.
Be objective - report what you actually found, not what you wanted to find.
Be objective - If your results weren’t what you were expecting, you need to state this and discuss possible reasons why.
Be critical - What evidence is there to support your interpretations? Where did the evidence come from – is it good quality?
Be concise - edit unnecessary detail. You have a word count like all other assignments, so use your words wisely.
Specific styles for reports...

Can use headings and sub-headings
Can use diagrams and tables to illustrate points.
Tables/diagrams need to be...

Discussed - they won’t explain themselves.

Clearly labelled

Referenced (if they come from another source)
Can use bullet points
BUT – always check your criteria
Inappropriate language in a report
After I added the solution to the beaker, the liquid went a really lurid green, which was unexpected, as this was not the same as the washed-out green colour it was supposed to go according to what the book said. I then stirred the beaker and left it for a little while. After several days, the mixture had settled to the bottom and dried out, which was not supposed to have happened; this was a bit of a problem.

1. Don’t use I
2. Avoid overly elaborate descriptions of colours – really lurid/washed out.
3. What book? Don’t include book details. Only cite the author and what they say should have happened
4. Vague terms – how long is a little while? Several days? Need to be specific
5. What exactly was the problem and why?
After the solution was added to the beaker, the liquid went bright green, which was unexpected. Smith (2019) states that it should have turned pale green in colour. The solution in the beaker was stirred and left for four days. After two days, the mixture had settled to the bottom and dried out, which was not supposed to have happened. The solution should have remained in liquid form. This could have been as a result of the temperature in the room (Jones, 2018).
References and resources


Found this useful?
Why not look at the Learning Hub’s guidance on other learning topics...

- Academic skills
- Advanced skills
- Presentations
- Referencing
- Researching
- Writing