

Report Structure

However you structure a report, you at least have to do the following:

- **Know your audience.**
- Set the stage of what you're talking about.
- Describe the analysis.
- Show its relevance.
- State any assumptions.
- Give references.

Rigid Article Format in Some Fields

- 1 Abstract
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Materials and Methods
- 4 Results
- 5 Conclusions and discussion
- 6 End matter: References, appendices

Internet is changing how writing is done; some journals allow/expect Web supplements.

Statistics journals are more relaxed.

Report/Article Structure according to D. Hawkins

- 1 Front Matter: Title page, abstract
- 2 Background/Introduction/literature review.
- 3 Detailed results.
- 4 References.
- 5 Technical appendix.

Title Page

Use a title page. Give

- Project title.
- Authors.
- Date.
- Necessary identifiers, like copyright, report number, funder, sponsor, circulation notices, and the like.

Use an interesting title — “Project Final Report” is pretty useless.

Date everything!

Abstract/Executive Summary/Main results

First section of report or scientific paper.
Should tell everything important.

- Short, to the point.
- Easy to read, little technical detail.
- Fully self-contained.
- Cover every major conclusion.
- Specifically state these conclusions.

Unless you are writing a play, poem or fiction, don't make readers wait for the punch line.

Background/Introduction

Sets the stage for the report:

- What is the problem?
- Why is it important?
- What is the context?

In a scientific paper, include a literature review.

Results

- Report the actual findings.
- Use an intermediate level of detail.
- Go point by point through hypotheses, conclusions, and how results are interpreted.
- Include only minimum pertinent output, tables, graphics in this section.
- Do not just dump output here (or in the appendix).

Conclusion

In a scientific paper, not usually a consulting report.

Evaluative discussion of what the work achieved and did not achieve.

Does not just duplicate the abstract.

Usually not technical.

References

Critical for a paper; may be useful for a report.

Only include those cited in report.

Use proper bibliographic style.

Omit section if no references.

Appendix

The appendix get details and archival material, e.g.

- Dense mathematics.
- Computer code.
- Computer output/tables/graphics.
- Data.

Don't just dump here.

Organize and annotate; don't make reader search.

Index

- Long documents need an index. A poor index can ruin a good book.
- \LaTeX & Word indexing tools: Think about the index as you write