

## What is a Report?

While the central function of the essay is analysis and persuasion (an argument), a Report's central focus is to inform, provide data, and make recommendations. Reports are most common in the sciences and business studies, but useful to a variety of subjects, disciplines, and professions.

## Basic Report Structure

1. Abstract
2. Table of Contents
3. Introduction
4. Methodology
5. Results
6. Discussion/ Analysis
7. Conclusion/ Recommendations
8. References
9. Appendices

**NOTE:** You can find more detailed handouts relating to each of these sections through the UCD Writing Centre website!

## Key Sections of the Report: Overview

- **The Abstract** announces the topic of the report and gives an overview of what is covered.
- **The Introduction** explains and justifies the topic of the report, and includes any background information needed to engage with what is presented. Where applicable, it also comments on the state of the field and previous research within the topic. It outlines the research objectives of the report, provides a summary of the methods and materials used, and announces the key findings and significance of the research.
- **The Methodology** justifies why the scholar made certain choices in the research process, what materials were used and why, what theoretical frameworks were made and why, and what the research environment was. This section needs clarity and, in the case of experiments, should be clear enough to be replicated by other scholars in alternative contexts.
- **The Results** section summarises the data collected and the treatment of that data in the research, outlining important trends. It records the scholar's observations and measurements documented while conducting procedures described in the Methodology. It addresses questions and hypotheses raised in the Introduction (it should also address any negative results from the research). The Results section often uses subheading and presents information visually in tables and graphs, both of which are more reader friendly.
- **The Discussion/ Analysis** provides an interpretation/analysis of the Results. It shows how the hypotheses have been demonstrated by the new research, and the extent to which knowledge in the field has been changed by the addition of this new data. It comments on any potential practical applications or theoretical implications of the research. It explains the major findings of the Report and their significance.
- **The Conclusion/ Recommendations** section summarises the report and, based on the research presented, makes further recommendations in terms of research, professional practice, policy, legislation, etc.