How to structure a report

A report presents information in a structured manner and is used to help make decisions.
What is a report?
What is the report meant to do?

The information/persuasion mix in reports

(Eunson, 1994)
Getting started...

- Remember that you do not have to write your report in the order that it will be read. It is often easier to start with the main body first and do the introduction, conclusion and recommendations later. Leave the summary until last.

- Decide on your main heading and subheadings and arrange these in a logical sequence. Then go through the information you have gathered and list your points under the appropriate headings.
Know your audience

- Most likely this will be described in the assessment scenario

- Read the requirements of the assessment very carefully. If you’re unsure, ask the lecturer!
Title (cover) page

- The Title Page must include:
  - title of the report
  - your name (and sometimes student number)
  - the name of your lecturer
  - the number and name of the unit
  - the due date
  - Use the cover sheet provided by the College
Table of Contents and Summary

- The **Table of Contents** must include:
  - the headings and subheadings used in the report with their appropriate page numbers

- The **Summary** must include:
  - an overview of the whole report, including a brief account of its contents, findings and recommendations. *It is suggested that this section be written last*, after the rest of the report has been prepared.
Introduction

The Introduction has three main objectives:

- Defines the purpose or aim - what is to be achieved
- Establishes the background to the report
- Describes the scope – the specific areas the report covers, including any limitations of the research
Report writing

Main body

- Should present:
  - the findings in a logical and in sequential order.
  - Concise headings and subheadings and numbered points to identify each section and to introduce new facts or observations.
  - Paragraphs to separate ideas; for each new idea start another paragraph.
Conclusion & Recommendations

● **Should consist of:**
  ○ the main points or findings of the report and an evaluation of the major facts presented. It contains no new information, ideas or facts.
  ○ brief statements outlining suggested actions for solving problems based on the information provided in the report. (not always required)
Reference list and appendices

- The Reference list:
  - should list in alphabetical order (by the author's surname) the information sources used in the report

- The Appendices:
  - should include any additional information such as statistics, tables, questionnaires or articles. Each separate appendix should be labelled 'A', 'B', etc and where appropriate referred to in the main body of the report.
Report writing

Report Writing Assessment

Select ONE of the following topics to write an information report. You will need to write a plan first – and then write or type the report.

You must use:
- Report writing structure
- Headings – numbered
- Formal language
- Paragraphing
- 500 words

Hand in: notes / plan / report

Your suburb
Write a report providing information about the suburb in which you live. You must decide on the most appropriate headings to use.

A Chosen Career / Occupation
Select an occupation that you know well. Write a report providing information about this occupation/career. You must decide on the most appropriate headings to use.

PROOF READING YOUR FINAL REPORT

Editing and proof reading your report are important steps in the process.

You need to check your spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure.

Print off your hard copy of the report and read it carefully. Reading aloud can help in this process.

Use the following check list to decide if your report is ready to send to the lecturer.

Ask yourself:

- Have you answered the question? Read it again.
- Is your report in a logical sequence?
- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Does each section have a heading?
- One paragraph – one idea?
- Does your introduction explain the topic?
- Does your Introduction have a thesis statement?
- Have you checked the length? 500 words?
- Have you checked your grammar?
- Have you checked your punctuation?
- Is this your own work??
Hands-on activity

You are a manager who has just received the following report from one of your employees, Melissa Tomkins. Her report is riddled with problems that range from typographical (changing fonts and sizes), to tone, to misspellings, to organisation of the material. Help her!

Count off: 1-2-3-4-5

All 1’s will read and note problems with page 1 (120).
All 2’s will do the same for p. 2 (121)
All 3’s will do the same for p. 3 (122)
All 4’s will do the same for p. 4 (123)
All 5’s will do the same for p. 5 (124)
I will do p. 6 (125)
References
