



This work was created by the LearnHigher CETL and is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

## Report Writing

Reports are normally structured into formal sections, which enables the person reading it to very easily go to the information they need – this differs from an essay, which is written in a single narrative style from start to finish. Academic Writing for Reports Read the following extracts from reports. In each case identify the main problem with the writing style, then rewrite the problematic sentences so they are more suitable for an academic report. Possible answers can be found at the end of this document.

### How do reports differ from essays?

Reports are...	Essays are...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Formally structured</li><li>• Informative and fact-based</li><li>• Written with a specific purpose and reader in mind</li><li>• Written in a style appropriate to each section</li><li>• Always include section headings</li><li>• Sometimes use bullet points</li><li>• Often include tables or graphs</li><li>• Offer recommendations for action</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Semi-structured</li><li>• Argumentative and idea-based</li><li>• Not written with a specific reader in mind</li><li>• Written in single narrative style throughout</li><li>• Usually do not include sub-headings</li><li>• Usually do not include bullet points</li><li>• Rarely include tables or graphs</li><li>• Offer conclusions about a question</li></ul>

LearnHigher ([www.learnhigher.ac.uk](http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk))

You will use a mixture of descriptive and analytical writing, for example, the method and result sections are mainly descriptive; the discussion section should be analytical.

**Example 1:** After adding the solution, the mixture in the test tube went a bright scarlet red, which we did not expect, as this was not the same as the washed out pink colour it was supposed to go according to the book. We shook the test tube up and left it for a while in the test tube stand. When we came back, the mixture had settled to the bottom and dried out, which it was not supposed to have happened; this was a bit of a problem.

**Example 2:** The results of the aforementioned experiment were collated in a systemized manner with all due care and attention. Once the results had been collected and processed with the appropriate process, it was necessary to perform the analysis upon them which was conducted using the computer statistical package previously mentioned in the methodology.

This work was created by the LearnHigher CETL and is licensed under a Creative Commons License.

**Example 3:** The questionnaire will be carried out in the public space next to the town hall, where local residents can be found and stopped. If we can't find enough local people to answer our survey, we'll do down the street and see if we can find some more in the shopping centre as there tends to be local youths hanging around there who we could ask.

**Example 4:** This is a feasibility study of the proposed extension to the property "22 Trumpington Terrace" commissioned by the residents Mr and Mrs Phelps. The house is a semi-detached, two bedroom property with glazed windows and a red door. It is situated on a quiet, winding street with nearby houses of a similar design and the residents have started a local Neighbourhood Watch group. The Phelps inherited the house from Mr Phelps' uncle and have been in residence there since 31st August 1998.