



This jubilant New Year marks
a fresh new start of brighter
and more exciting journeys.

I wish you will have
the most enjoyable ride ever!

Happy New Year
to you and your family!

Happy New Year!

S . S . GREETINGS

Writing Reports

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By the end of this Presentation you should
be able to :

- Understand the purposes of a report
- Plan a report
- Understand the structure of a report
- Collect information for your report
- Organise your information
- Use an appropriate style of writing
- Present data effectively
- Understand how to lay out your information in an appropriate way

There are different types of report

During your time at university you may be asked to write different types of reports, depending upon the subject area which you have chosen.

These could include laboratory reports, technical reports, reports of a work placement or industrial visit, reports of a field trip or field work.

The following stages are involved in writing a report:

- clarifying your terms of reference
- planning your work
- collecting your information
- organising and structuring your information
- writing the first draft
- checking and re-drafting.

The terms of reference

The terms of reference of a report are a guiding statement used to define the scope of your investigation.

You must be clear from the start what you are being asked to do. You will probably have been given an assignment from your tutor but you may need to discuss this further to find out the precise subject and purpose of the report. Why have you been asked to write it ?

Planning your Report

- Consider the report as a whole
- Break down the task of writing the report into various parts.
- How much time do you have to write the report?
- How can this be divided up into the various planning stages?
- Set yourself deadlines for the various stages.

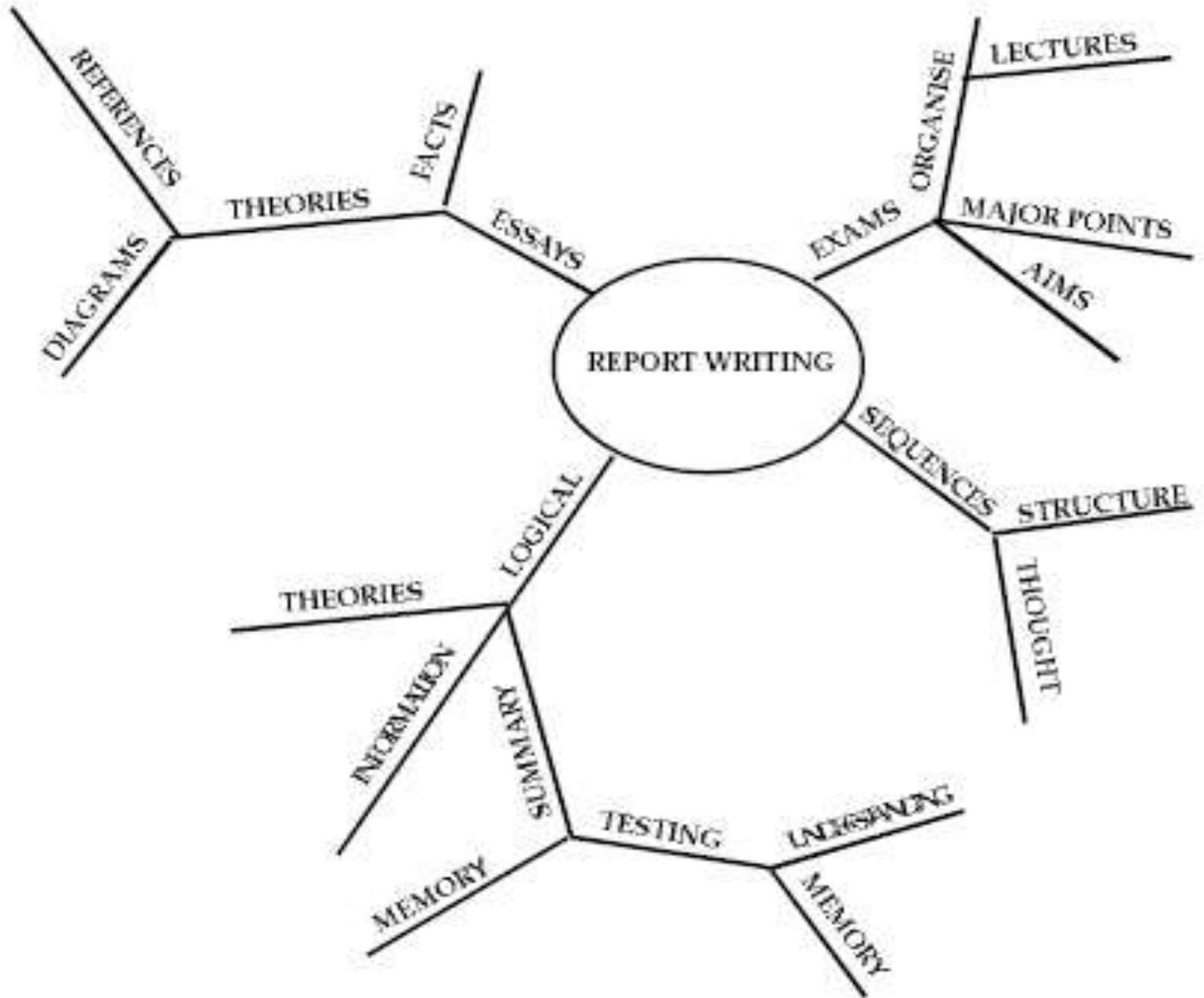
Collecting Information

- What is the information you need ?
 - Where do you find it ?
 - How much do you need ?
 - How shall you collect it ?
 - In what order will you arrange it ?
-
- Make a list of what information you need.
 - Make an action plan stating how you are going to gather this.

Organising information

Write the main theme in the centre of a piece of paper.

Write down all the ideas and keywords related to your topic starting from the centre and branching out along lines of connecting ideas.



Structuring your report

**Always check with the person
commissioning the report**

Structuring your report

- Title page
- Acknowledgements
- Contents
- Abstract or summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Results or findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion and recommendations
- References
- Appendices

Title page

This should include

the title of the report (which should give a precise indication of the subject matter),
the author's name, module, course

and the date.

Acknowledgements

You should acknowledge any help you have received in collecting the information for the report. This may be from librarians, technicians or computer centre staff, for example.

Contents

You should list all the main sections of the report in sequence with the page numbers they begin on. If there are charts, diagrams or tables included in your report, these should be listed separately under a title such as 'List of Illustrations' together with the page numbers on which they appear.

Abstract or summary

This should be a short paragraph summarising the main contents of the report.

It should include a short statement of the main task, the methods used, conclusions reached and any recommendations to be made.

The abstract or summary should be concise, informative and independent of the report.

Write this section **after** you have written the report.

Introduction

- This should give the context and scope of the report and should include your terms of reference.
- State your objectives clearly,
- define the limits of the report,
- outline the method of enquiry,
- give a brief general background to the subject of the report and
- indicate the proposed development.

Methodology

- In this section you should state how you carried out your enquiry.
- What form did your enquiry take ?
- Did you carry out interviews or questionnaires,
- how did you collect your data ?
- What measurements did you make ?
- How did you choose the subjects for your interviews ?

Present this information logically and concisely.

Results or findings

Present your findings in as simple a way as possible. The more complicated the information looks, the more difficult it will be to interpret. There are a number of ways in which results can be presented. Here are a few :

- Tables
- Graphs
- Pie charts
- Bar charts
- Diagrams

Illustration checklist

- Are all your diagrams / illustrations clearly labelled?
- Do they all have titles?
- Is the link between the text and the diagram clear?
- Are the headings precise?
- Are the axes of graphs clearly labelled?
- Can tables be easily interpreted?
- Have you abided by any copyright laws when including illustrations/tables from published documents?

Discussion

This is the section where you can analyse and interpret your results, drawing from the information which you have collected, explaining its significance.

Identify important issues and suggest explanations for your findings.

Outline any problems encountered and try and present a balanced view

Conclusions and recommendations

This is the section of the report which draws together the main issues.

It should be expressed clearly and should ***not*** present any new information.

You may wish to list your recommendations in separate section or include them with the conclusions.

References

It is important that you give precise details of all the work by other authors which has been referred to within the report. Details should include :

- author's name and initials
- date of publication
- title of the book, paper or journal
- publisher
- place of publication
- page numbers
- details of the journal volume in which the article has appeared.
- See the module website for a good link on references [1]

References

When referencing an article in an academic journal, the form to follow is:

- Author of article,
- date of journal,
- title of article in inverted commas,
- title of journal underlined or in italics,
- Volume of journal, Issue number,
- Page number of the journal that the article begins on, or pages it starts and finishes on. For example:

Fage, J.D. 1989 "African Societies and the Atlantic Slave Trade" *Past and Present* no. 125, November 1989 pp 97-115

References

Standard form for a web bibliography entry:

Author's surname,
rest of name,
date of document,
Title of document,
<[web address](#)>,
date accessed.

An example of this is:

McCrum, Ian J. 2007 Report writing
http://www.eej.ulst.ac.uk/~ian/modules/MEC002J1/report_writing.ppt
(accessed 29th September, 2007)

Bibliography

- A reference has page numbers and is directly referred to in the text [2]
- A bibliography is a book or long article that provided useful background reading, but was either not directly referred to by page number or you used it so much that you'd need to refer to a lot of page numbers.
- Do not confuse references and bibliography

Appendices

An appendix contains additional information related to the report but which is not essential to the main findings.

This can be consulted if the reader wishes but the report should not depend on this.

You could include details of interview questions, statistical data, a glossary of terms, or other information which may be useful for the reader.

Detailed drawings, or other listings which might obscure the main text can be put here.

Style of writing

Active or passive?

The active voice reads as follows:

'I recommend ...'

The passive voice reads:

'It is recommended that ...'

Be aware of these differences and avoid mixing the two voices.

Style of writing

- **Simplicity**

- it's message must be clear.
- avoid using overly complicated language.
- Avoid using unnecessary jargon.
- Be cautious of confusing your reader.
- Choose language for the target audience

- **Layout**

- The most common system is the decimal notation system.
 - 1. *Introduction*
 - 1.1 _____
 - 1.11 _____
 - 1.2 _____
 - 1.21 _____
 - 2. *Methodology*
 - 2.1 _____

Presentation

- Leave wide margins for binding and feedback comments from your tutor.
- Paragraphs should be short and concise.
- Headings should be clear - highlighted in bold or underlined.
- All diagrams and illustrations should be labelled and numbered.
- All standard units, measurements and technical terminology should be listed in a glossary of terms at the back of your report.

Checklist

- **Title page:** Title? Author's name? Module/course details?
- **Acknowledgements:** all sources of help listed
- **Contents:** listed in sequence, consistent, list of illustrations, glossary etc,.
- **Abstract or summary:** states tasks, methods, conclusions, recommendations, complete
- **Introduction:** terms of reference, what asked, limits, outline, brief background
- **Methodology:** describes form it took and the way data was collected - so it can be repeated
- **Reports and findings:** are diagrams clear and simple, referenced, labelled, relate to text
- **Discussion:** key issues, findings explained, problems outlined, balanced view
- **Conclusions & recommendations:** contains all main ideas, avoids new info, clear, concise
- **References:** All listed, style correct and consistent, accurate? Correctly dated
- **Appendices:** contains supporting information, report reads ok without reading appendices
- **Writing style:** clear & concise, short sentences jargon free, correct voice, good paragraphs
- **Layout:** each section labelled, labelling consistent
- **Presentation:** sufficient margin, clear headings, spelling

- **Overall:**
 - What are the main points for consideration?
 - What have you done well?
 - What needs fine tuning?

Thank you