There are two main types of reports:

- **Informational**
- **Analytical**

Both of these reports require analytical thinking and writing, as well as a descriptive overview or background of the topic.

**An Analytical Report:**
- Provides information
- Analyses information
- Draws conclusions from the information
- Recommends action on the basis of the information.

**An Informational Report:**
- Provides information
- Does not analyse information
- Does not recommend action.

For general topics, such as the impacts of privatisation of the media, it is likely that you will write analytical reports. For lab reports you would more likely write an informational report on the findings of an experiment you have conducted.

The typical structure of a report includes most, if not all, of the following sections. Refer to your unit outline and your tutor for clarification on what sections you will need to include in your report.

A typical report will include:

- A Title Page
- An Abstract
- A Table of Contents (this must be included if the report is longer than 10 pages)
- Acknowledgements (if required)
- An Introduction
- The Discussion, or body, of the report (the content)
- Your Conclusion
- Any Recommendations
- An Appendix or Appendices
- And your Reference list.
Title Page:
The title page will contain:

- The report title, which clearly states the topic of the report
- Full details of the person or persons for whom the report is intended
- Full details of the person or persons who prepared the report
- Date of the presentation of the report (or the date submitted if you are not presenting it).

Abstract:
The abstract is one of the most important components of the report. It will be read by vastly more people than those who will read the whole report, and needs to provide enough information to invite the audience to read on.

Although the audience will read this first, you should leave the writing of your abstract as the last step. This will allow you to summarise the content of your report in a concise and clear format.

Depending on the length of your report, an abstract is usually no longer than 10% of the paper, or 100-200 words.

An abstract aims to:

- Provide a brief overview of the whole report
- Give concise, complete, specific and self-sufficient information that can be easily understood
- Offer recommendations for executives and managers to base their decisions on.

Introduction:
Your introduction will:

- Provide background information on the topic
- State the purpose of the report
- Indicate the scope, including limitations
- Outline the methods used to gather information
- Clarify key terms
- Inform the reader of what your report will cover
- Give the reader a preview of how the information will be presented.

It will also include your literature review of any publications you have used for your report.

For tips on how to write a literature review, follow the link below this slide to Grammarly’s post on How to Write a Literature Review.
Content:
The content of your report will depend on its purpose.
Your report should contain primary sources if possible (such as observations and interviews), as well as secondary sources to provide explanations of theory and background.
You should further detail the methods of your investigation, including what you did and why, and any issues encountered in the process.
In the body content you will explain the findings gathered from your research, and discuss the implications they hold.
Remember to separate your key ideas and concepts into clear headings and subheadings, so that you break up your report into digestible pieces of information for the reader.

Conclusion:
Your conclusion will be a summary of the key points you have raised in your discussion. In this, you will need to:

- Contextualise your observations, findings, and analyses
- Remind the reader what you have informed them in the body content (i.e. what you researched, what you discovered, what implications or problems this raises)
- Do NOT include new information here
- Give a sense of completion to your report.

Recommendations:
Think of this as an action plan for how to resolve or improve the issue.
Try to make your recommendations as realistic as possible, and identify clear paths of how these recommendations could be achieved by the responsible parties.

Appendix/Appendices:

- This is a section where you can include further information that is relevant to your topic but did not fit in the body of your report
This can include (but is not limited to) graphs, tables, and raw data collected as part of your investigation.

Activity: Have a go at the activities on the right-hand side of the page to revise what you have learnt so far about reports.