Reports must be written objectively, containing facts and information, rather than personal viewpoints.

Use formal language, but remember you can use dot points if necessary.

Tenses will depend on whether investigations and research methods are still ongoing, but generally you will write the report in past tense.

In most cases you will write in the passive voice, particularly when writing scientific reports. This is because you are outlining the action or method performed, rather than focusing on who was completing the action.

See Active and Passive Sentences in the online Better Sentences program for more detail on when to use active or passive sentences.

As with all assignments you submit at university, you will need to follow the formatting requirements set out for you by your unit coordinator or lecturer. This includes:

- Font size and type (for example, Times New Roman)
- Margin and line spacing
- Headings and subheadings
- Referencing style
- And page numbers.

These requirements can usually be found in your unit outline, or ask your tutor if you are unsure.

In some reports you may refer to diagrams, tables and figures, and visual representations of data to support your discussion. Some reports may include these where relevant to the textual information within the report; others may have a section, called an appendix, dedicated to illustrations, graphics, and so on, and will have corresponding numbers to indicate their place in the report. Whether you include these in the body content or in an appendix, you will need to ensure they are clearly labelled and their sources are cited.

You can also use dot points, numbers, and letters to separate elements of the report. Whichever style you choose to use, make sure it is consistent.

Use white space between paragraphs to break up your paragraphs and increase readability.