Writing a Report

"Some academic assignments ask for a 'report', rather than an essay, and students are often confused about what that really means.

Likewise, in business, confronted with a request for a 'report' to a senior manager, many people struggle to know what to write" (SkillsYouNeed).

"In academia there is some overlap between reports and essays... Whereas an essay presents arguments and reasoning, a report concentrates on facts" (SkillsYouNeed).

"Essentially, a report is a short, sharp, concise document which is written for a particular purpose and audience" (SkillsYouNeed).

A report is factual piece of writing that sets out a topic, describes it and analyses it. It needs to be presented clearly and with a logical structure that flows.

You will probably be given instructions about the purpose of the report, the issue it is to address and the audience it is meant for.

Know your topic

Keep your topic in mind

Avoid irrelevance

Keep themes together

Reference where necessary

Structure

Abstract/Executive summary

What was done, how it was done and what the main findings were. An overview. Best if it is the last part to be written. It needs to work as if it is the only part of the report that the recipient has time to read!

Contents page

List the numbered sections and subheadings, in order, with page numbers.

Introduction

Sets the scene. Outlines the aim of the report including a statement on what you are NOT doing. What problems are you addressing? What is the history of your topic?

Main body

Use sections (one for each theme) and subheadings within the sections, numbered and/or bullet points to make your material easy to locate and follow. Include description, information, arguments and summaries. Structure and content needs to be logical. The material needs to be easy to find and easy to follow.

Conclusion

Summarise the main points of the work to remind the reader what has been said.

Bibliography/Reference list

https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/writing-resources/reports
https://www.skillsyouneed.com/write/report-writing.html
http://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/reports.php