

Name: _____
Science - Period : _____
Date _____

WRITING A LAB REPORT

The purpose of any lab report should be to record your findings and communicate what you have learned. With these goals in mind, here are some typical guidelines for writing a lab report.

Get organized. A good lab notebook is your key to success in the lab. Record everything in this notebook, and use it as a reference when you write the report.

Take notes during any pre-lab discussion. Good notes will make writing the report go much faster. You will usually be given some clues as to what to observe or how to do the calculations.

Always record the units when collecting data. It's easy to forget a few days later the units you saw for the data you collected.

FORMAT:

1. Title The title should clearly describe the nature of the experiment. In some cases, you may be able to use the title of the lab your teacher provides. However, be sure that the title provides clear information. Don't forget to include your name, period, date, and the names of any lab partners with your title section.

2. Purpose This section should describe the problem or **hypothesis** you are investigating. The introduction should include the reason you are studying the problem and any useful outside information related to the problem or hypothesis. The hypothesis should be stated as a statement not a question.

3. Materials This section describes all materials you used to gather and analyze your data

4. Procedures This section describes your method you used to gather and analyze your data, and the **controls** in your experiment. This section should be written in the past tense and passive voice.

For example:

Three 50 mL beakers were each filled with 25 mL of water.

Do not write:

I filled three beakers with water.

5. Results In this section, you describe what you found out through the experiment. Results include your observations, measurement data, graphs, and tables. Calculations and answers to all lab questions should be included.

DATA TABLES AND CHARTS

Choose a title for your data table, and then make a list of the types of data to be collected. This list will become the headings for your data columns. For example, if you collected data on plant growth over time, you could record your data in a table like the one below.

PLANT GROWTH OVER TIME

Time (days)	Height of plant (cm)
1	10
3	12
5	15
7	18
9	20

GRAPHS

- Pick the best type of graph for displaying your data (line, bar, or pie graph)
- When using line graphs:

Choose the scale for each axis of your graph. The scale should take up as much of the paper as possible so that the results can be clearly seen. Then, choose the interval for the scale (the number of days represented by each block in the *x*-axis scale, for example). Remember, once you choose the interval for the scale, you cannot change it. If you change the interval of your scale, your graph will not accurately represent your data. Mark the points for each pair of numbers. When all points are marked, draw the best straight or curved line between them. Remember that you do not "connect the dots" when you draw a graph. Instead, you should draw a "best fit" curve—a line or smooth curve that intersects or comes as close as possible to your set of data points.

6. Conclusion The conclusion is where you summarize your findings and state whether you proved or disproved your hypothesis. State what worked with your experiment. Describe any problems you had with the procedure or anything that you would change to improve the experiment if you were to repeat it again.