

RESEARCH STRUCTURE

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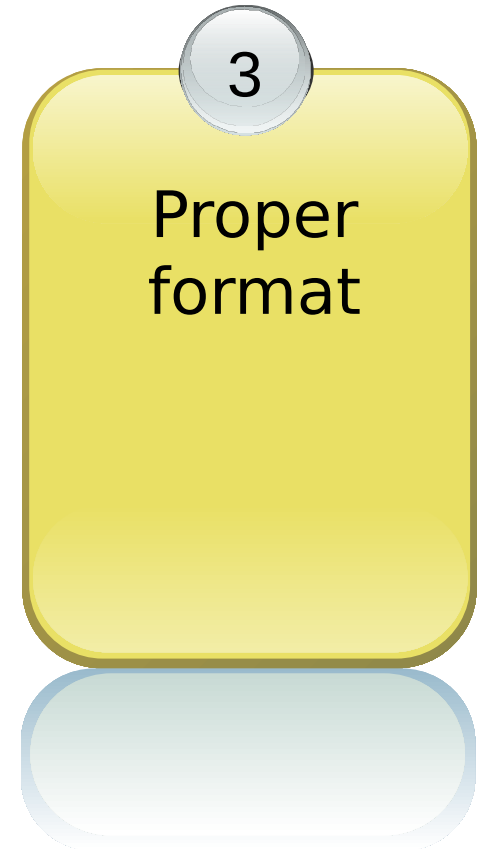
OUTLINE

- Structures of reports
- Academic writing style in reports
- Use of graphical data
- Analysis of the findings
- Checklist for effective reports

Full definition

- A document that presents information in an organized format for a specific audience and purpose.

Criteria for a good report



Differences between reports and essays

Reports/Research paper

- **Formally structured**
- **I..... and f.....-based**
- **Written with a specific purpose and reader in mind**
- **Written in a style appropriate to each section**
- **A..... (adv.) include section headings**
- **S..... (adv.) use bullet points**
- **O..... (adv.) include tables**

Essays

- Semi-structured
- Argumentative and idea-based
- Not written with a specific reader in mind
- Written in single narrative style throughout
- Usually do not include sub-headings

Decide whether the following topics are more likely to be written as reports or essays.

- *1 The development of trade unions in South Africa*
Essay

- *2 Two alternative plans for improving the sports centre*

Report

- *3 A study you conducted to compare male and female attitudes to eating*
- *Report*

- *4 An overview of recent research on the human genome*
- *Report*

- *5 The arguments for and against capital punishment*
- *Essay*

3. Structure of a report

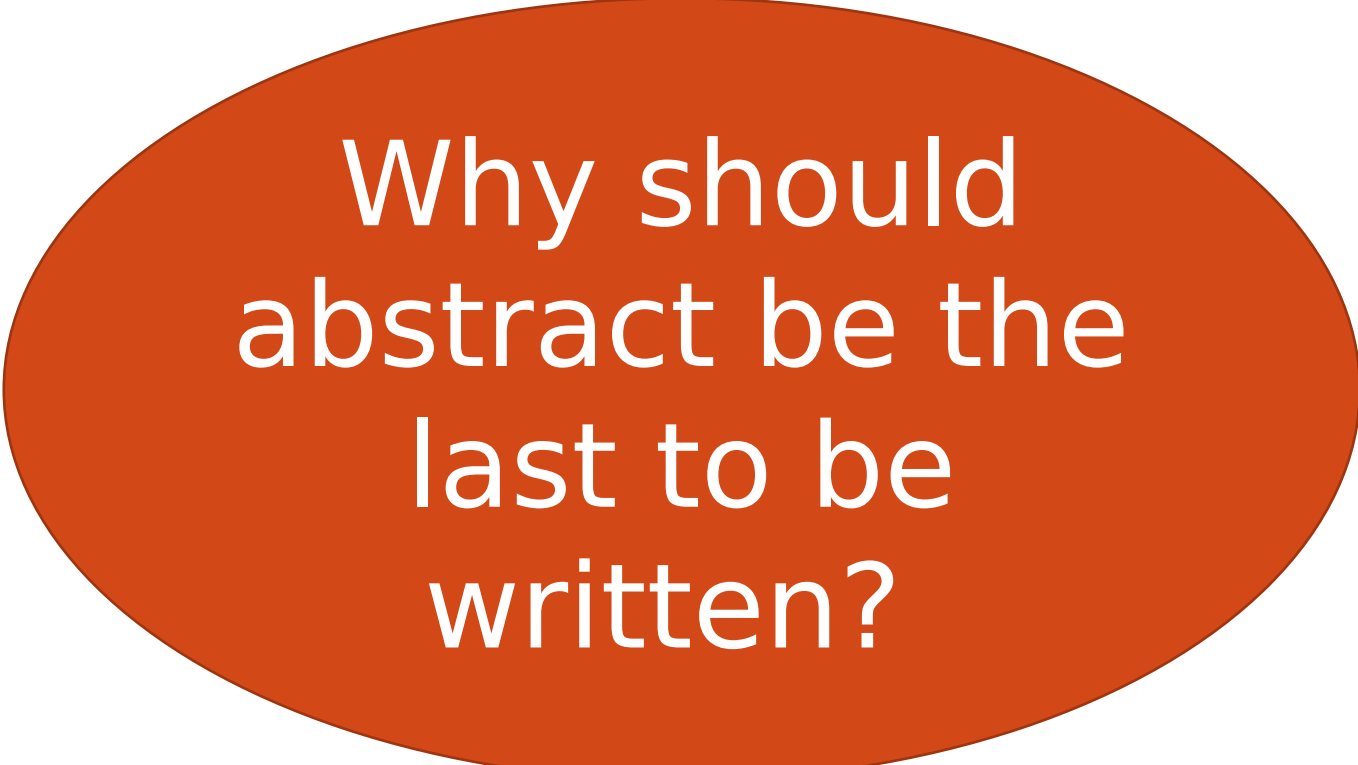
- **Title**
- **Abstract/Summary**
- **Introduction**
- **Literature Review**
- **Methods/Methodology**
- **Results/Findings**
- **(Discussion)**
- **Conclusion & Recommendations**
- **References**
- **Appendices**

3. Structure of a report

- **Title**
- state **the topic** of the report
- E.g.: A report on spending habits among UEB students

3. Structure of a report

- **Abstract (Summary or Executive Summary)**
- The 'shop window' for your report.
- It is the first (and sometimes the only) section to be read and should be the last to be written.
- *What is the **purpose** of the work?*
- *What **methods** did you use for your research?*
- *What were the **main findings and conclusions** reached as a result of your research?*
- *Did your work lead you to make any **recommendations** for future actions?*

A large, solid orange oval is centered on a light gray background. Inside the oval, the text "Why should abstract be the last to be written?" is written in a white, sans-serif font, arranged in four lines.

Why should
abstract be the
last to be
written?

Analyzing the following abstract

This study aims to investigate how English language teachers at the researcher's university have implemented cooperative learning (CL) as a learning strategy in their speaking classes and explored whether implementing this strategy is effective to Vietnamese learners of English in the development of their oral proficiency. (1) With descriptive research design, the study was carried out with the first-year English major students at the university, with a view to finding out how CL can help them to improve their English in general and their speaking skills in particular. (2) Questionnaires and classroom observation were used as the main data collection instruments in doing the research to get an insight of how CL had been applied in speaking classes and the effectiveness of using it in developing students' speaking skills. (3) Two kinds of questionnaires were administered, one for the first-year English major students in their first semester of the academic year 2022-2023. (4) The other was for English language teachers at the university. (5) Simultaneously, classroom observation was conducted during six speaking lessons in class to collect information. (6) The findings of the study reveal that CL was implemented in different activities in the speaking lessons and helped to enhance the students' speaking skills effectively, which implies that CL can be considered an effective method of teaching speaking skills for teachers of English and should be applied extensively to promote its benefits. (7)

3. Structure of a report

- **Introduction (Background or Context)**
- Purpose
- Scope
- Methodology

The scope of a study

- explains the extent to which the research area will be explored in the study
- defines the population size and characteristics, geographical location, the time period within which the study will be conducted, etc.
- E.g.: your study is about online personal banking
 - it will not be possible for you to cover all banks and all individuals who use the online banking system.
 - you can maybe specify that your study will cover 100 people of one *particular area* and examine their use of the online banking system.

3. Structure of a report

- **Literature Review**

- This is a **survey of publications** (books, journals, authoritative websites, sometimes conference papers) reporting work that has already been done on the topic of your report.
- It should only include studies that have **direct relevance** to your research. A literature survey should be written like an essay in a **discursive style**, with an introduction, main discussion grouped in themes and a conclusion.

Literature Review Example

Studies of ecotourists typically have identified them based on the destinations they go to (e.g. National Parks), the behaviours in which they engage (e.g. wildlife viewing), the tours that they take (e.g. safaris), or in a few cases, self-identification by the travellers themselves (Ballantine & Eagles, 1994; Fennell, 1999; Saleh & Karwacki, 1996; Wight, 1996, 2001). On very few occasions and only recently, studies have begun to identify ecotourists based on their psycho-social personal makeup (Lemelin & Smale, 2007) of more stable and deeply ingrained character traits responsible for directing visitor motivations and behaviours (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Lewis & Haviland-Jones, 2000)....However, the way in which ecotourists have been typically identified in the bulk of the literature is limited by relying too heavily on superficial markers of behaviour, destination, and/or circumstance (Nowaczek & Smale, 2010, pp. 45- 46).

Literature Review Example

Juric, Cornwell, and Mather (2002) developed an Ecotourism Interest Scale with a focus on visitors' activity interests. Although exploratory in nature, the scale is used to identify tourists' desire for eco-friendly activities (i.e. a measure of ecotourism interest) and to predict their participation in selected tourist activities. By segmenting tourists based on their level of interest, different travel products could be created based on the level of interest they reported; as such, Juric, Cornwell, and Mather's scale is product-oriented and potentially reflects a view of, and orientation towards, ecotourism as a form of mass tourism (Weaver, 2001b) or simply a business opportunity (McKercher, 2001). (Nowaczek & Smale, 2010, p. 48).

3. Structure of a report

- **Methods (Methodology)**
- Particular methods (questionnaires, focus group, experimental procedure etc.)
- Participants

3. Structure of a report

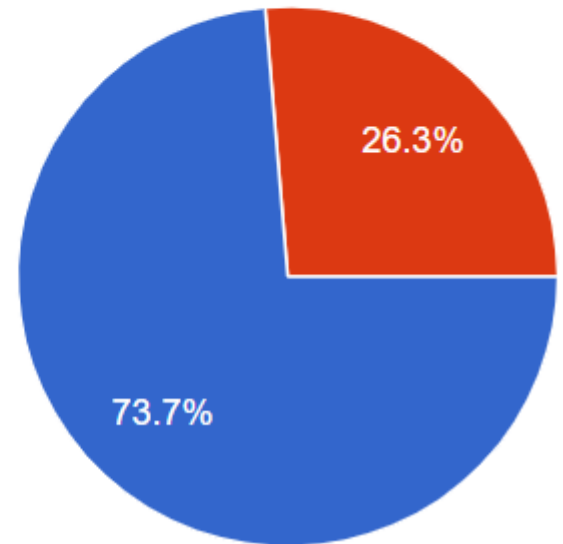
- **Results (Data or findings)**
- 1 graphical format
- Clear, factual and informative

Findings-Example

Have you ever used "Flipped classroom" in ESP teaching? If yes, please continue with the following questions. If no, you can finish answering the survey now. Thank you very much for your cooperation.



19 responses



- Yes (please answer the following questions)
- No (you can stop answering the survey)

3. Structure of a report

- **Discussion**
- The longest section and worth spending time on
- Should be written in a discursive style
- Discuss not only what your findings show but why they show this
- Any problems

3. Structure of a report

Conclusion

- Restatement (all the main findings)
- Recommendations for action

3. Structure of a report

- **References (Reference List or Bibliography)**
- Full details for any works you have referred to in the report

3. Structure of a report

- **Appendices**
- Additional information: questionnaires, interview questions, raw data or a glossary of terms used

Practice 2

For this exercise, read the following short extracts from reports found in various journals. Decide which of the above sections they are from, and why they are appropriate for this section.

Keys

- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Results
- Introductions/Literature Review
- Abstract

4. Academic writing style in reports

- Avoid colloquial or informal language.
- Avoid personal or familiar language.
- Avoid ambiguous, imprecise or vague words.
- Do not use 'wordy' expressions either.

Practice 3

- Read the following extracts from reports.
- In each case identify the main problem with the writing style, then rewrite the problematic sentences so they are more suitable for an academic report.

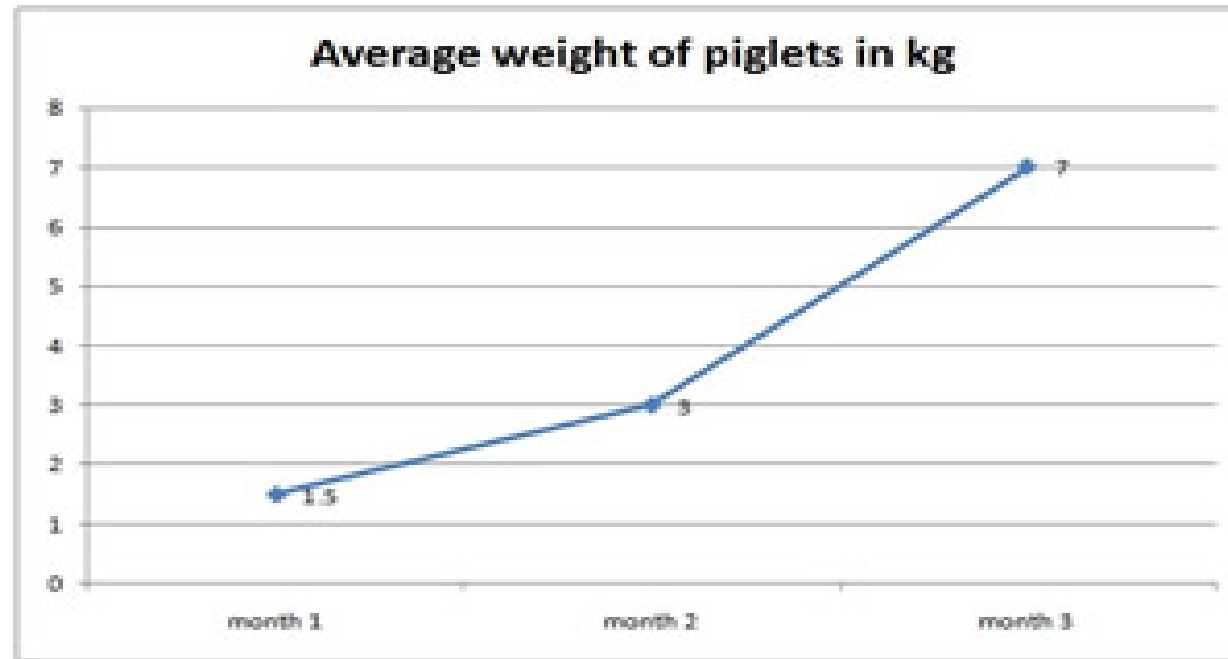
5. Using graphical data

- Tables
- Line graphs
- Bar charts/graphs
- Pie charts

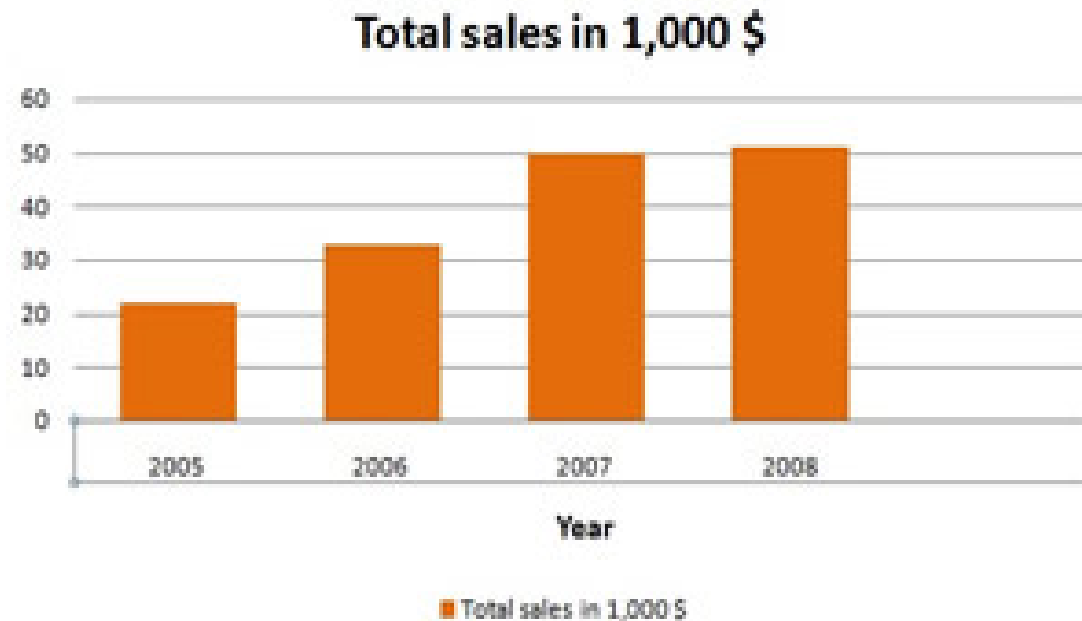
Tables are useful when you need to present a quantity of numerical data in an accessible format and you need to show exact numbers.

	Term			
	Autumn 07	Spring 07	Summer 07	Total
No of teas sold	500	567	609	1676
No of coffees sold	603	799	465	1867
No of cokes sold	355	455	700	1510
Total	1458	1821	1774	5053

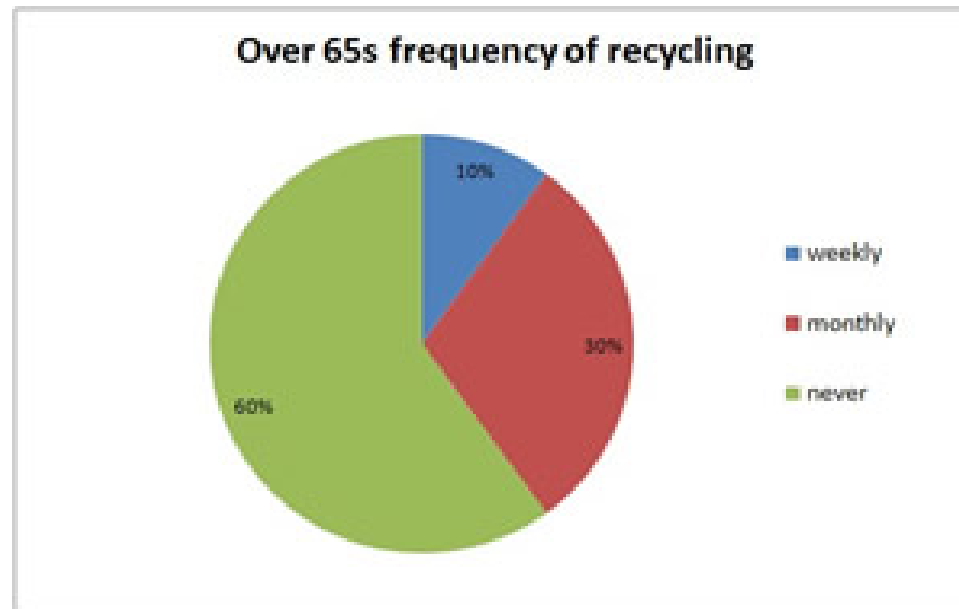
Line graphs are especially effective at showing trends (how data changes over time) and relationships (how two variables interact).



Bar charts/graphs are good when you want to compare discrete items. The bars can be vertical or horizontal. Making them different colours can help the reader to differentiate each result.



Pie charts show the proportion of the whole that is taken by various parts.



6. Analyzing the findings

- ***Findings***
- ***What do you think about this?***
- ***What makes you think that?***
- ***What conclusions can you draw from this?***
- ***Final paragraph for Discussion section***

Finding	95% of the students you surveyed have problems managing their time at university.
What do you think about this?	I expected it to be less than that.
What makes you think that?	Research I read for my literature survey was putting the figure at 60-70%.
What conclusions can you draw from this?	There must be reasons why the figures are so different. The sample I surveyed included a large number of mature students, unlike the samples in the previous research. That was because the brief was to look at time management in a particular department which had a high intake of post-experience students.
Final paragraph for Discussion	The percentage of students surveyed who experienced problems with time management was much higher at 95% than the 60% reported in Jones (2006: 33) or the 70% reported in Smith (2007a: 17). This may be due to the large number of mature students recruited to this post-experience course. Taylor (2004: 16-21) has described the additional time commitments

7. Checklist for effective reports

- Does it answer the purpose stated (or implied) in the brief?
- Does it answer the needs of the projected reader?
- Has the material been placed in the appropriate sections?

7. Checklist for effective reports

- Has all the material been checked for accuracy?
- Are graphs and tables carefully labelled?
- Is data in graphs or tables also explained in words and analysed?
- Does the discussion/conclusion show how the results relate to objectives set out in the introduction?

7. Checklist for effective reports

- Have you discussed how your results relate to existing research mentioned in your literature survey?
- Has all irrelevant material been removed?
- Is it written throughout in appropriate style (i.e. no colloquialisms or contractions, using an objective tone, specific rather than vague)?

7. Checklist for effective reports

- Is it jargon-free and clearly written?
- Has every idea taken from or inspired by someone else's work been acknowledged with a reference?
- Have all illustrations and figures taken from someone else's work been cited correctly?
- Has it been carefully proof-read to eliminate careless mistakes?