

BA (H) GEOGRAPHY

SEMESTER IV

SEC: RESEARCH METHODS

Unit 5: Report Writing

A report is a written account of something that one has observed, heard, done, or investigated. It is a systematic and well organised presentation of facts and findings of an event that has already taken place somewhere. Reports are used as a form of written assessment to find out what you have learned from your reading, research or experience and to give you experience of an important skill that is widely used in the work place.

Reports may contain some or all of the following elements:

- A description of a sequence of events or a situation;
- Some interpretation of the significance of these events or situation, whether solely your own analysis or informed by the views of others, always carefully referenced of course (see our page on [Academic Referencing](#) for more information);
- An evaluation of the facts or the results of your research;
- Discussion of the likely outcomes of future courses of action;
- Your recommendations as to a course of action; and
- Conclusions.

Not all of these elements will be essential in every report.

If you're writing a report in the workplace, check whether there are any standard guidelines or structure that you need to use.

Sections and Numbering

A report is designed to lead people through the information in a structured way, but also to enable them to find the information that they want quickly and easily.

Reports usually, therefore, have numbered sections and subsections, and a clear and full contents page listing each heading. It follows that page numbering is important.

Modern word processors have features to add tables of contents (ToC) and page numbers as well as styled headings; you should take advantage of these as they update automatically as you edit your report, moving, adding or deleting sections.

Tables, Figures and Equations

- All tables (tabulated data) and figures (charts, graphs, maps, images, diagrams, etc.) should be prepared, wherever possible, on the same paper used to type the text and conform to the specifications outlined earlier. They should be inserted as close to the textual reference as possible.
- Tables, figures and equations should be numbered sequentially either throughout the thesis or chapter-wise using Arabic numerals. They are referred to in the body of the text capitalizing the first letter of the word and number, as for instance, Table 17, Figure 24, Equation (33), or Table 5.3, Figure 3.11, Equation (4.16), etc.
- If tables and figures are of only half a page or less, they may appear on the same page as text but separated above and below by triple line spacing. Font size for text should be the same as for the general text.
- Good quality Line Drawings/figures must be drawn using standard software that provides vector rather than bit-map graphics. Figures must be scalable.
- Images, Photographs, etc. must be scanned in resolution exceeding 200dpi with 256 grayscales for the monochrome images and 24 bit per pixel for the color images.