



WRITING A FORMAL LABORATORY REPORT

TITLE (5 POINTS) --The title should consist of a few well-chosen words that summarize the purpose of the lab activity. The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is always a good place to start. The title of the lab report is centered in the middle of the page, with names and date in the lower left hand corner.

HYPOTHESIS (10 POINTS) -- This statement is a prediction of the results of a series of tests. It should usually be in the form of an if/then statement or some variation of that form. It should be testable, logical, and based on common knowledge.

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN (15 POINTS) -- Describe what you physically did in the lab. Details would include an explanation of procedure/techniques, materials needed, etc. Be sure to list what the dependent and independent variables, the controls, and the constants were in the experiment.

DATA COLLECTION (20 POINTS) -- State the results, observations and data from your lab. Staple tables and sketches to the back of the report. These should be clear, neat, and labeled. Tables and charts should be accurate, organized and include clearly-labeled column names, units, and proper significant digits.

DATA ANALYSIS (20 POINTS) -- Analyze your lab results by explaining what they mean. Graphs should be neat and clear with title, axis, names, units, and appropriate scaling. Point out and explain similarities and differences between your results and others in the class or standard values.

CONCLUSION (20 POINTS) -- How did the results of your experiment compare to your prediction? Was the hypothesis supported? Evaluate your experimental procedure/technique. Explain possible sources of error or problems that may have influenced your results.

STYLE AND MECHANICS (10 POINTS)

- Write in the past tense and use passive voice. (“I” or “we” do not belong in lab reports.)
- Use metric units.
- If you start a sentence with a number, write out the number.
- Refer to animals and plants by their scientific names. Underline or italicize the Latin name.
- Use plain white paper for the title page. Type or print in black ink.
- All other pages should be typed if possible or written neatly in black ink on white-lined paper. Results may be created on the computer or by hand.
- Each report should be unique to your group. Do not copy other groups’ data, answers, or any other parts of the lab write-up.