Writing Practical Reports in Science

When writing a practical report it is important to assume that the person reading it has no prior knowledge of the work and that they will be able to reproduce the experiment (in particular the Method) without any problems.

# Title

Each report should be headed with a brief title indicating the area experimentation. eg: "Stopping a bicycle".

# Aim

State the purpose of the experiment in 1-2 sentences.

# Hypothesis

This is the possible answer to the problem being investigated.

(This may not appear in some reports)

# Equipment

List any apparatus, equipment, or chemicals needed to perform the experiment.

# Method/Procedure

* Enables you to state exactly what you did
* Must be in point/numbered form.
* Diagrams may be used to show how the experiment was set up.
* Should be recorded in past tense eg:
  + Measure 10ml of water = present tense
  + 10ml of water was measured= past tense
  + (this may be difficult for some students and will be negotiated with the teacher)
* Should also be recorded in "passive voice" - you say what was done rather what you did eg:
  + “The circuit shown above was set up” not “ I set up the circuit shown above”
  + (This may be difficult for some students and will be negotiated with the teacher)

# Results

* Any data or observations arising from your experiment should be recorded in a table of results.
* You may need to analyse your data, perhaps by applying a formula or drawing a graph.

# Discussion

This outlines what the results of the experiment show. Answer the following questions:

* Is the hypothesis supported or disproved?
* What problems were encountered?
* How could the experiment design or method of data collection be improved?
* What errors have been made?

# Conclusion

Your conclusion should answer your aim and in 1-2 sentences state the result of the experiment.