

*'Let's get on with it'*



What is a RESEARCH REPORT?

A Research Report is the final product (a document) which provides details about the process and result of a research. A research report contributes towards the accumulation of knowledge in a specific area.

## Always remember:

Your aim is to 'report' to the reader the results of your investigation. This entails explaining to them what you set out to investigate, why and how you carried out the investigation, the results you obtained and your conclusions. Provide enough details so readers can be convinced of the quality of your research and the validity of your conclusions.

## A research report consists of:

- 01 Title Page
- 02 Abstract and Summary
- 03 Table of Contents
- 04 Other Lists
- 05 Introduction
- 06 Statements of the Problem
- 07 Literature Review
- 08 Methodology
- 09 Results
- 10 Discussion

- 11 Conclusion
- 12 References
- 13 Appendix/Appendices

## 01 Title Page

Be brief and descriptive. Use your title to convince your readers to invest the time to read your report. Avoid jargon or the vernacular in your titles.

Sample title:

*Should listening be taught to university students?*

The title page should also include:

- 01 your name and student identification number.
- 02 the course name and number.
- 03 marker's name, if you know it.
- 04 the date of submission.

## 02 Abstract & Summary



For further information see the **Abstracts Study Guide**

The abstract is a summary of your research. It should answer the following questions briefly:

- 01 What is the research problem and why is it important? (objective/research question).
- 02 What methodology did you use?
- 03 Who were your participants? Did you use dependent or independent variables?
- 04 What did you find? (findings or results)
- 05 What do your findings mean? (conclusions)

*Hint: The abstract should NOT include any references or any material not mentioned in the report itself.*

## 03 Table of Contents

This is a list of all the sections and sub-sections of a report with their page numbers. Its purpose is to:

- 01 enable your reader to see what points the report covers.
- 02 show how you have organised your material.
- 03 enable readers to turn immediately to the page they require for specific information.

*Hint:* Pagination in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, etc) start on the 'Introduction' page and continues until the Bibliography. Before the Introduction, Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, v) should be used.

## 04 Other Lists (applies to reports containing the following):

- 01 Maps
- 02 Figures
- 03 Tables
- 04 Appendices
- 05 Glossary of acronyms, abbreviations, foreign words, etc.

## 05 Introduction

Briefly show how your research builds on prior knowledge. Present and evaluate what is already known about your research problem. Also present the problem being investigated, the importance of the research, and an overview of your research strategy.

The introduction should provide answers to the following questions:

- 01 What do you intend to do?
- 02 Why is the work important?
- 03 What has already been done about this issue/problem/topic?
- 04 What are your predictions about your findings?

## 06 Statement of the Problem

Say why you have chosen the topic, why the topic needs investigating, and what your purpose is. Mention also why you have adopted your particular research design.

## 07 Literature Review



For further information see the **Literature Reviews Study Guide**

Discuss the published findings about the same topic from other researchers. Also provide a critical appraisal of others' theories, and a basis for the gap your research intends to fill.

## 08 Methodology

Mention the details of methods and procedures, and the reasons for choosing these methods and procedures. The following should be addressed here:

- 01 the rationale for the methodology you used
- 02 your hypotheses
- 03 a description of your study area
- 04 demographic details of your study population
- 05 the selection criteria for the population you used
- 06 descriptions of types of data and sources
- 07 a description of the methods and procedures for obtaining and analysing your data

## Subjects (participants/population)

Also known as 'sample' or 'participants', subjects are the people you used in your research/study. State clearly how and why you selected them. Describe your sample with sufficient detail so that it is clear what population(s) the sample represents. Discuss how your sample was formed so that future researchers who may want to use similar sampling procedures will have clear guidelines.

*Hint:* You should not identify particular individuals or schools specifically, but instead describe your subjects/institutions in meaningful categories, e.g. 'co-educational secondary school in a large urban centre' or '40 year-old male business owners'.

## Materials

These are materials used if an experiment was performed or teaching was done, etc. Describe briefly any questionnaires or instruments used to obtain your data (full information should be included as an appendix). Offer reasons for the types of questions used.

*Hint:* Instruments are what you use to gather information (questionnaires etc)

## Procedures

These are the methods you used to collect and analyse your data. Describe these clearly in logical order. Give a step by step account of how the research was done, the research design and methodology chosen, and describe how you analysed your data.

## 09 Results

This is where you provide details of the main findings. It should be as clear, concise and complete as possible. Enough details should be offered here to enable people to make up their minds about the validity of your research. Draw readers' attention to results that are particularly significant. Present your results in such a way that they are meaningful to your readers. Provide a summary explanation of results and accept or reject hypotheses if you have any.

If you carried out interviews, summarise the main things you found. You may also include individual responses which are interesting or good examples of significant points. You have to consider the best way of presenting data, for example, do you want the reader to be able to make comparisons easily?

### Numerical data

Clearly state any statistical applications you used. If the figures involved are rather small, include details of the raw numbers as well as percentages, so that readers have a realistic picture of, for example, the size of your sample. Try to summarise the data in tables or other visual forms. Each table or figure should be given numbers in a sequence, for easy reference. It should have a title or explanatory sentence to tell the reader what it is about. When the results are discussed in quantitative terms don't say, for example, 'x treatment was more effective'. Instead, say by how much it was more effective.

## 10 Discussion

In this section you are linking your results back to your introduction. You may not fulfil your expectations, in fact, you may find the opposite of what you predicted. You are expected to do the following:

- 01 Discuss and interpret your findings for the reader. Show whether or not there is a relationship between your findings and your original aims and/or hypothesis. Comment on whether or not the results were expected, and present explanations for the results, especially for those that are unexpected and unsatisfactory. Put the results in context (compare them with previous research or existing theory) in order to explain them. Give reasons to account for the differences between your research and previous research or existing theory.

- 02 Tell the reader the implications of your findings. Consider the conclusions you arrive at and how they relate to the broader issues that are part of your research.
- 03 Make recommendations. Do not be afraid to state your opinions. Point to directions for future research that can:
  - patch up problems in your study
  - replicate and extend your results
  - follow up on promising new leads

Return to the specific problem you investigated and tell the reader what you think now and why. Relate your findings to those of previous studies, by explaining relationships and supporting or disagreeing with what others have found. Describe your logic and draw your conclusions. Be careful, however, not to over generalize your results. Your conclusions should be warranted by your study and your data. Be sure to recognize the limitations of your study. Try to anticipate the questions a reader will have and suggest what problems should be researched next in order to extend your findings into new areas.

## 11 Conclusion

This is where you offer the following:

- 01 a restatement of the research problem
- 02 a summary statement of main findings and their significance
- 03 shortcomings of the research
- 04 agenda for future research

## 12 Bibliography

This is a reference list of all the relevant sources that you have referred to or cited in the text of your research proposal.

Check with your lecturer about the referencing system you should use. Use a standard format. Order the references alphabetically.



For further information see the **Using References Study Guide**

## 13 Appendix/Appendices

This is where you put all your statistical data, questionnaire sample(s) or any detailed information which may be too bulky to be included in the text of your report. Organise your Appendices according to the following order: Appendix 1, Appendix 2, Appendix 3, etc.