

## Some basic tips for writing a lab report, essay or thesis



# KEEP CALM AND USE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Use **formal, objective and impersonal language** when writing a scientific report.

**Don't use 'I', 'Mine', 'You', 'Yours'**. It is also preferable not to use 'they' too often.

As a writer, you remain in the background and the reader is not addressed directly either.

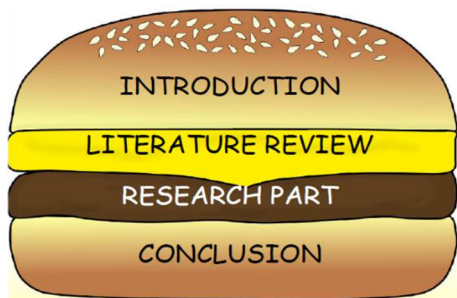
**Technical terminology** is ok if you are writing for an audience that is familiar with it. If not, use as many descriptions and/or synonyms as possible or introduce the terminology in your text.

Writing **formally and impersonally** doesn't mean that you have to write long-winded.

Get your message across **succinctly**. Avoid endless sentences, unnecessary repetitions and/or archaic language.

Write, rewrite and... rewrite until you get to the **essence** of your message.

How To (Re)write:  
Backspace is Your Friend



A (lab) report, essay, thesis is like a hamburger and consists of a **number of fixed parts**. The minimum amount of parts is shown in the adjoining picture.

Make sure your **text is logically structured** by using sufficient chapters, sections and paragraphs.

In the Education and Examination Code of the UGent, plagiarism is defined as follows: *'To commit plagiarism is to present (parts of) a source as original and your own, without adding any acknowledgements. It can relate to different forms of production, such as texts (written, oral), images (photographs, film, graphs, diagrams, figures, etc.), music, databases, a structure, a line of reasoning, or ideas.'*

**So cite your sources... ALWAYS!**



This **checklist** supports you while writing scientific (lab) reports, essays and theses.  
 These are also the criteria by which you can be assessed when writing your report.  
 How to write a paper? Improve your English writing skills. Check [taaladvies-UGent!](#)



## Criteria by which you can be assessed when writing your report,...

*Use the list below to assess yourself before you hand in your report or paper.*

*The lecturer will give a score, based on the following scale:*

**5= excellent 4= very good 3= good, ok 2= needs to be improved 1= unsatisfactory**

*Use this score as a starting point for your next report or paper!*

### CONTENT

Is the problem embedded in a scientific context?

Is the report's structure logical and scientifically correct?

Are the research questions and sub-questions relevant?

Was sufficient data collected?

Does the data effectively answer the research questions?

Are the study and report coherent? Is there a thread running through the report?

Are specific terminology and/or abbreviations sufficiently explained?

Is the conclusion clear? Does the conclusion answer the research questions?

***Additional criteria, determined by the lecturer and depending on the subject:***

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<b>STYLE OF WRITING and USE OF LANGUAGE</b>	
Is the style of writing sufficiently formal, concise and scientific?	
Is the style of writing sufficiently dynamic/fluid?	
Were grammar and spelling mistakes corrected?	
Are all sources used in the text sufficiently and correctly referenced (check plagiarism)?	
<b>STRUCTURE</b>	
Is the report organized as follows, if relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Index;</li> <li>- Introduction;</li> <li>- Body;</li> <li>- Conclusion;</li> <li>- Reference list,...</li> </ul>	
Does the report have an appropriate cover sheet?	
Is the structure of the text logical in terms of sufficient chapters, sections and paragraphs?	
Are the titles and subtitles sufficiently informative?	
<b>LAYOUT</b>	
Is the layout formal, clean (or carefully edited) and consistent?	
Were the correct types of graphs and/or tables used?	
Are all graphs and tables numbered?	
Are the captions of tables (to be placed above the table) and figures (to be placed below the figures) correct and informative?	
Is the layout of the figures sufficiently adequate: font size, legend, readability, ...?	
Does the text correctly introduce/refer to tables and figures?	
Are the references in the text and the reference list technically complete and correct?	