

## Writing Scientifically

An important aspect of research is the presentation of your results in written format. Writing in a scientific manner, however, is quite different from how you would write in other subjects.

### Language

- **Terminology.** Don't avoid using the terminology associated with your subject. When using abbreviations, however, write the words out in full with the abbreviation in brackets the first time you use it, thereafter you should use only the abbreviation
- **Use the third person.** Avoid I, me we, us, my, our, mine. If you're writing a lab report, dissertation or paper, the most difficult sections to write in the third person are the Materials and Methods and Results sections.
- **Write in the past tense.** By the time someone's reading your work you'll have completed the research, so it must be written in the past tense.
- **Be concise.** Don't use ten words if one will do. Often you'll be given a strict word limit to adhere to which leaves no room for waffle

### Structure

- **Paragraphs.** These help to break up the monotony of the text and help make your work easier to read. They can also be used to subtly change the subject.
- **Section headings.** Are used for major changes in subject. They're also good for breaking up the monotony of the text and remind the reader of the subject area.
- **Formatting.** Follow any guidelines you're given. Increasing the line spacing to 1.5 can improve the ease of reading
- **Citations and references.** Your work should contain numerous citations in the body of the text and a thorough reference section at the end of your document.

### Content

- **Title.** Should indicate what the research is about, be short, snappy and eye-catching
- **Abstract.** Gives an overview of what you've done, why you've done it and the results you've achieved.
- **Keywords.** A few key words that describe what your research is about
- **Introduction.** A review of previous research that's been conducted in the same research area
- **Materials and Methods.** What you've done and how you've done it. Should be detailed enough to allow the work to be reproduced.
- **Results.** Written explanation kept to a minimum with figures, plates and tables used to highlight key points.
- **Discussion.** How do your results compare with previous work? Why are there differences?
- **Conclusion.** What do your results mean?
- **References.** What sources did you use?