

Lab Reports & Scientific Papers

Checklist for Lab Reports & Scientific Papers

- Is the title concise and does it adequately describe the contents? For example, with the title, "Substance Y Alters Blonial Structure of Elephant Bone Marrow," researchers interested in substance Y, blonial structure, elephants, or bone marrow should recognize that the article might be of interest to them.
- Are the appropriate headings and subheadings included and in proper order? A typical scientific paper includes the following sections: title, abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and references. Always check with your instructor for your specific assigned paper's sections.
- Are tone and style appropriate? Scientific writing, for the most part, is intended to be more factual than entertaining; it shouldn't be embellished with descriptive language, anecdotes, humor, or dialogue.
- Does the writer use passive voice, the generally accepted convention? The writer of a lab report, for example, should use the passive past tense: "Solution A was centrifuged," not, "I centrifuged Solution A."
- Are sentences short and to the point, expressing facts clearly and concisely? Does the writer answer all basic questions about the topic?
- Have conventions related to symbols and abbreviations been observed?
- Are figures and tables numbered and accompanied by explanatory captions? Are they introduced before they appear in the text?

The content of this handout was adapted with changes from the following source:

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

This handout was created by the Writing Centers at YVC.

Yakima Campus, Glenn-Anthon 125 | Grandview Campus, Grandview Main 101

Visit us at the [Writing Center's homepage](#).

