

Lab Report Tips

This list is only a general format for an introductory level lab report. Your instructor may or may not want everything outlined on this list included in your lab report. Always be aware of your instructor's guidelines.

Lab Report Guidelines Table

Table 1

Section	General Guidelines
Title Page	• Include the title for your lab report, your name, the lab section you are in (ex 119L-02), the date the lab report is due, and your lab partners' names.
Introduction	• Include background information for the experiment you performed in lab. Think of this as a way to introduce some "trivia facts" about either the experiment or materials studied in the experiment. ALWAYS use peer-reviewed journal articles for these facts; the library databases are extremely helpful for this task. Include the purpose for the lab and your hypothesis for the experiment. Your instructor can help you formulate these. • CITE your sources.
Materials & Methods	• Give an exhaustive account of EVERYTHING performed and EVERYTHING used in lab. Write this section so that someone reading your report could repeat the experiment by just using your report. • Cite the lab manual in this section frequently. Everything you did in lab was taken from there.

Results	• This section should include any tables from the lab manual that were used in recording results. • Include any graphs that your instructor asks you to create using results from lab. Excel is VERY useful for graphs and there are numerous online tutorials for making Excel graphs. • Tables and graphs should each have 1-2 sentences following them describing what they say.
Discussion/conclusion	• This is the only section where you will interpret your results. What do they mean? After seeing your results, can you support or reject your hypothesis? Why? • Make sure to state any specific errors that you might have encountered. How could this experiment have been carried out more efficiently? • Explain why this experiment is significant to biology. What greater purpose could it serve in a real situation?
References	• Most instructors ask for at least 3 sources: one being your lab manual, and another being your textbook. After this you only need one more. Cite properly. Most lab reports will be in APA, ACS, or CSE styles. All of these guidelines can be found online.
Appendix	• An appendix is only necessary if there is any data that wasn't placed in the results section because it didn't need interpreting. • Normally, this would include your "raw data;" your instructor should inform you if you should include an appendix on your report.

For more information on writing lab reports, make an appointment with a [writing tutor](#).

Appointments are available in person at the [Student Success Center](#) or online.