

HOW TO PLAN YOUR REPORT

Before deadline	Task	Process	
3 - 4 weeks	STEP 1	ANALYSE THE QUESTION	Consider the limiting factors, the subject, authorities, keywords, definitions, relevant terminology; follow instructions. Brainstorm with friends or mull over the question for a few days.
3 weeks	STEP 2	ROUGH PLAN	What are you being asked to find out? Consider the factors that have led to this state of affairs and remember – you are not describing, but explaining why or how. Find your focus.
2 - 3 weeks	STEP 3	RESEARCH	Allocate small periods of time to spend in the library or searching for online journals, etc. Colour-code the references. Where else can you look for material?
10 days	STEP 4	FILLING IN THE REPORT	Do not write in sentences. Enter your facts as bullet points in your Findings . What do you deduce from these facts and why – this goes in the Analysis .
7 days	STEP 5	WRITE THE ANALYSIS	Convert your notes and instructions into good sentences.
5 days	STEP 6	PROOF READ YOUR REPORT	Read out loud. Read for specific know errors. Read for presentation. Read to check bibliography. Remove headings.

THE CONTENT OF THE REPORT

			Length
1	TITLE PAGE	Title of Report, your name, who the report is for (tutor), the date. University assignment details are not written on this page.	Separate page.
2	CONTENS	List of all main headings and their page numbers. Complete at end.	
3	TERMS OF REFERENCE	Short statement outlining nature scope & boundaries of the report. This is where you set out your argument: What are you trying to prove?	Not the title.
4	SUMMARY	A brief “round-up” of the concluding elements of the report. Yes, here at the beginning. Your report is not a mystery novel. Be brief.	
5	INTRODUCTION	Set the context, prevailing conditions, chosen examples and present a rationale – why these examples, why this report – now? Be brief.	Very few marks.
6	METHODOLOGY	Justify the primary data collection method, if used eg questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups, etc, plus sampling methods. Not essential to include this heading if only secondary data used.	Keep this brief if included.
7	FINDINGS	All the factors and opinions collected either as primary data or as secondary data. Summarise primary data with tables or charts.	Almost half marks awarded.
8	ANALYSIS & CONCLUSION	What do you deduce from the Findings and why? This should be a discussion; look for arguments for and against. Weigh up the pros and cons. No new material.	Almost half marks awarded. Word count should show this.
	CONCLUSION	Main inferences from the Findings. This is short.	
9	RECOMMENDATIONS	Bases on the conclusion alone, what would you recommend, suggest possible ways forward, evaluate your own research. No new material.	
10	REFERENCES	Listed in alphabetical order according to author/website. List here only references you have used in your Findings .	Not part of word count.
11	APPENDICES	Only items that cannot be practically included in your Findings. Label appendices and ensure everything included is mentioned in your Findings .	Not part of word count.