Writing a Report

See also: *Super Tips – Writing an Essay*
              Super Tips – Writing in an Appropriate Style
              Super Tips – Differences between Essays, Reports and Journals

During your studies you may be required to research a particular area and produce a report. For instance, depending on your area of study, you might be asked to write a report on the performance characteristics of an aircraft engine, the classroom management practices of a teacher, the cost benefits of using a particular type of software in a company, etc.

Some of the reasons we write reports are to:
- inform
- make proposals or recommendations for change
- analyse and solve problems
- present the findings of an investigation or project
- record progress

Your lecturer or teacher will usually provide you with the following information:
- the topic or subject of the report
- the required length and due date
- a clear idea of its purpose and who will read it
- the format headings to be used and their order.

Steps in writing the report

Writing your report is an ongoing process of writing and re-writing. Therefore, it's important to realise that you don't need to begin at the introduction and write until you get to the conclusion. Often the body is written first. Also, you're not expected to produce the perfect report the first time you put pen to paper – expect to have to redraft your report.

A useful writing process for longer reports is to:
- **organise your information**
- **write an outline**
- **write a first draft**
- **re-write to improve the draft**
- **edit and proofread**

You'll also need to consider the presentation of the report, in particular:
- **format and layout**
- **inclusion of graphics and visuals**

Organising the information and writing an outline

For many students, the main difficulty in writing a report is to organise the information. By the time you've finished researching, you've often gathered an incredible amount of information. So, what do you do with this large pile of papers? You have to break down the