



TECHNICAL REPORT WRITING FOR ENGINEERS

LANGUAGE DO'S AND DON'TS

Here are some Do's and Don'ts to help keep you on track.

DO ...

- ◆ Remember who the reader is.
- ◆ Write the methods section in chronological order (in the same order that you carried out the experiment).
- ◆ Write the methods section in paragraphs and connect your sentences.
- ◆ Use the Passive Voice (usually Past Passive, e.g. "*the measuring device was calibrated*").
- ◆ Use sequence words to explain the order of what happened e.g. "**First** *the measuring device was calibrated and checked and the guillotine cleaned with white spirit. Next* *the specimens were measured. Following this, ...*".
- ◆ Use words and phrases like 'to', 'so as to' and 'in order to' to explain the purpose of a stage or step of an experiment e.g. "*The guillotine was cleaned with white spirit in order to ensure a clean cut and to prevent contamination.*"
- ◆ Use full forms rather than contractions e.g. 'do not', 'will not', 'cannot'.
- ◆ Use specific vocabulary, e.g. 'item', 'equipment', 'object', 'material', 'sample'.

DON'T...

- ◆ Copy and paste the instructions from the Lab or Experimental brief (e.g. 'Calibrate the measuring device')
- ◆ Just list your actions.
- ◆ Use 'I' or 'We.'
- ◆ Use colloquial sequence words like 'after that' or 'so in the end'.
- ◆ Use 'Then' at the beginning of a sentence. Place it like this: "Load was then applied".
- ◆ Use vague words e.g. 'stuff', 'things'.
- ◆ Use phrasal verbs, idioms or metaphors such as "the signal was wiped out".