# Writing a Reflective Report

## What is a Reflective Report?

Reflective reports are more structured than a typical essay, and they follow some general guidelines:

- Use Subheadings to organize the report;
- Write in the past tense because the experiment has already been completed;
- Write in the future tense when discussing next steps;
- It's OK to use the first person; however, it should be efficient.
- Adhere to conventional English i.e., no contractions, colloquial expressions, or slang
- Provide scholarly research to support background, experimental rationale, and viability of future experiments

## What is included in a Reflective Report?

Typically, Reflective Reports are found in STEM fields of study. They require writers to report an experiment's findings, and can be organized into three sections:

- They articulate the context for which an experiment was conducted in an **Introduction/Background** section to provide
    - **Background, historical information or precedent** for the experiment;
    - **A rationale** (related to research in the field) for the experiment;
    - **Answers** for what the experiment aimed to achieve;
    - **Relationships** to other experiments in the field.
- In the **Process/Active Experimentation** section, the writer clarifies, in chronological order
    - What the various **challenges** were;
    - What **approaches in experimentation** were explored;
    - What the experiment looked like i.e., **setting and materials** used;
    - **What happened** during (beginning, middle, and end) the experiment;
    - Why a particular choice of action was pursued and **how that course of action relates to scholarship in the field**;
    - **The results** of experimental design and decisions.

- In the final **Abstract Conceptualization** Phase, writers discuss wat they have learned through their experiment and how they plan to move forward with new experiments. This section clarifies
    - The **main lessons** the writer learned and how they will apply this knowledge in future experiments;
    - How **approaches** in future experiments may be changed or adjusted;
    - How the writer will **evaluate the feasibility** of their future experimental designs;
    - **Theoretical models** most relevant to the researcher's experiments, and how the researcher's actions reflect these frameworks;
    - The **immediate and long-term effects** of the researcher's experiments;
    - **Key steps** required for future experiments?
    - **Instruments** necessary to ensure professional and personal improvement

# Key Takeaways!

- In short, a recipe for a good reflective piece can be written down as follows:
    - **Study the assignment guidelines** thoroughly to understand what is expected of you.
    - Start with a **description**, proceed with **analysis** and **evaluation**, and conclude with an **action plan** for the future.
    - Follow the **introduction-process/active experimentation-abstract conceptualization** structure.
    - **Include** only relevant, concrete information.
    - Use **details** to make your description vivid.