

A Comparison of a report and an essay:

Report	Essay
It often describes, analyses and investigates information on past events, and often recommends future actions.	It seldom relates to past events and seldom recommends future actions.
It usually aims to solve problems or to improve a situation, by making informed recommendations.	An essay presents logically supported ideas relating to a topic or an issue. The aim of an essay can vary depending on the instructional words in the essay question, such as <i>discuss</i> , <i>critically analyse</i> , <i>explain</i> and <i>describe</i> .
It is often based on reading and fieldwork (e.g. interviews) or reading and practical work (e.g. experiments).	It is often based on reading, and occasionally on fieldwork.
It has many parts under headings such as <i>terms of reference</i> , <i>findings</i> , <i>conclusions</i> and <i>recommendations</i> . May use sub-headings.	It has 3 main parts: introduction, main body and conclusion. Usually an essay has no headings or sub-headings.
Paragraphs and complete sentences are used.	Paragraphs and complete sentences are used.
It uses a numbering system and sometimes bullet points.	It does not use a numbering system or bullet points.
The conclusions are logically deduced and interpreted from the relevant information collected.	The (single) conclusion is usually a summary of the key points covered in the main body.
It has citations and a reference list.	It has citations and a reference list.
It can include a bibliography, glossary and/or appendices.	It rarely has a bibliography, a glossary and/or appendices.
It is addressed to a superior or client, but it is often meant to be read by your tutor.	It is written for your tutor.

References

- Bradford University School of Management. (n.d.). *Return to full-time study: A workbook for older students returning to full-time higher education*. Retrieved April 22, 2008, from <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/management/external/els/pdf/returntostudyarttime.pdf>.
- RMIT University. (2007, February). *Differences between essays, reports and journals*. Retrieved April 22, 2008, from http://www.dlweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_AssessmentTasks/assess_pdf/diffbet_reportsessays.pdf.