

Explanations for field lab write-ups

The field labs in Physical Geology require 2 page (maximum) write-ups. Text must be computer-formatted (not hand-written), and must at least approximately follow these guidelines:

- Page size: Standard 8.5 x 11 inch.
- Font: 10 to 12 point.
- Margins: 1 inch all around.
- Line spacing: Double.
- First line: Title.
- Second line: Your name and the date.
- Third line: Text begins.
- Paragraphs: Indent first line, no blank lines between paragraphs.
- Length: 2 pages maximum, excluding figures, tables, captions, and references.
- Figures: All labeled and cited in the text, referenced in order as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- Tables: All labeled and cited in the text, referenced in order as Table 1, Table 2, etc.

The object of these write-ups is to have you look at the data and geologic descriptions, and to interpret the data in terms of geologic materials and concepts. You should write about the field site in a way that would allow fellow students to easily understand what you did, what your data are, what you learned, and why you learned that. The reports should be a cogent, intelligent, flowing narrative, with approximately this sequence:

1. Brief description of the site, with the outcrop scene, rock types, and rock ages.
2. Brief description of how the data were collected.
3. Brief description of the data.
4. Brief interpretation of the data in terms of site geology.
5. Each point should clearly reference to your own supporting evidence (tables, figures).

Don't answer the questions posed in the lab handouts in a bare 1-2-3 sequence. Instead, use a flowing narrative, like a story. You may use information beyond that collected in lab, but be sure to give complete and appropriate citations, as necessary. You should use accurate and precise language, rather than trying to use flowery and clever language. Say what you mean, simply and directly.

WARNING! Although you will usually work in groups, all work handed in must be your own. This includes text, graphs, drawings, and data tables (except those I post on Nexus). Violations are plagiarism, so don't do it.

The written reports will be graded on a 0 to 5 scale according to the following guidelines. Use the guidelines to help write better reports. See the [syllabus](#) to see how number scores pertain to letter grades. A score of 2 or lower indicates that substantial improvement is warranted.

Score guidelines

- 5 Presentation of the geologic problem, data, and interpretation demonstrates a high degree of writing and thinking competence. A report in this category generally has the following properties:
 - Well-organized and concise.
 - Clearly distinguishes between fact and interpretation.
 - Accurate and complete description of factual data.
 - Accurate and complete interpretation.
 - Uses relevant data in a clear and logical way to support the interpretations, refers in the text to all figures and tables.
 - Free or nearly free of errors in language mechanics, word usage, spelling, and/or proofreading.

- 4 Presentation of the geologic problem, data, and interpretation demonstrates a good degree of writing and thinking competence. A report in this category generally has the following properties:
 - Fairly well-organized and reasonably concise.
 - Fact and interpretation are usually well distinguished.
 - Description of factual data is largely complete and accurate.
 - Mostly accurate and complete interpretation.
 - Relevant data is used in a logical way to support some of the interpretations, some figures and tables are referred to in the text.
 - Largely free of errors in language mechanics, word usage, spelling, and/or proofreading.

- 3 Presentation of the geologic problem, data, and interpretation demonstrates an adequate degree of writing and thinking competence. A report in this category generally has the following properties:
 - Adequately organized.
 - Fact and interpretation are sometimes distinguished.
 - Description of factual data is adequate, but may be incomplete or contain some inaccuracies.
 - Interpretation is adequate but may be somewhat incomplete or inaccurate.
 - Relevant data is used to support some of the interpretations, but there may be problems with the logic of the support.
 - Few or no figures or tables are referred to in the text.
 - Generally free of serious errors in language mechanics, word usage, spelling, and/or proofreading.

- 2 Presents parts of the geologic problem, data, and interpretation, but generally without logical connection or logical form. An report in this category has at least one of the following problems:

- Inadequate or illogical organization.
- Fact is mostly confused with interpretation.
- Description of the factual data is seriously incomplete.
- Interpretation is seriously incomplete or wrong.
- Relevant data are not significantly used to support the interpretations, or there are serious flaws in the logic of support.
- A pattern of serious errors in language mechanics, word usage, spelling, and/or proofreading.

1 Little coherent description of the geologic problem, data, or interpretation connected with the assignment. A report in this category has at least one of the following problems:

- Little discernible organization.
- Inaccurate representation of the facts.
- Description of factual data is missing.
- Interpretation is missing.
- No data are used to support the interpretations, or severe flaws in the logic of support.
- A pattern of persistent, major errors in language mechanics, word usage, spelling, and/or proofreading.

0 A report in this category has the following serious problem: No or wildly incomplete report.

What's the easiest thing to do to get a great score? Proof read: re-read your work to make sure, read it aloud to yourself to make extra-sure:

- Every sentence is complete and makes sense.
- Your report reads like a story, with a beginning, middle, and logical end.
- You cite every figure as Figure 1, Figure 2, etc.
- You cite every table as Table 1, Table 2, etc.
- Look up spellings of words you don't know. Spell-check will not help with some of them, but pay attention to spell-check anyway for the others.
- It's only two pages, how hard can it be?