**Identify yourself and your partner**

    Use the header function in Word to identify yourself and your partner. You will notice the light blue text in the upper right hand corner of the document template. Double click on it to open the Header & Footer Toolbox. The document text is now pale blue and the header is in bold. The text size in a header or footer is usually smaller than the document text and it will appear on every page of your document. Fill in your name (first and last), the name(s) of your partner(s) (first and last) and the date the report is due. Click Close in the Toolbox to return to the document.

**Title**

    Use the title of the activity. For our purposes, the title will be used to distinguish one lab report from another.

**Purpose**

    This gives the objective of the activity. What concept or skill was highlighted by this activity. Ask yourself " Why did we do this activity? What was I supposed to learn or practice?" Sometimes the purpose can be stated in one sentence. Other times it may be necessary to add some extra information to narrow the scope of the activity.

**Materials**

    This should be a sentence or two that lists the materials that were needed to carry out this activity. This could also be in the form of a table.

**Procedure**

    This is probably one of the most difficult parts of the report for the beginner. Most of the writing you have done up to this point has included a lot of descriptive language. Technical writing is very "cut and dried" by comparison. All you are trying to convey is a mental picture of what you did. Ordinal phrases are not necessary. The order of events is conveyed by the sentence order in the description. Remember that your audience should be able to repeat your procedure if they wish to do so. Write your description of what was done so that the reader can visualize the set-up. Be sure to include reference to any equipment that you used (The mass was taken on a balance.) A diagram or picture of the apparatus may be helpful but should not replace a good verbal description. Be very specific in your instructions. Emotions (This was hard. or This was fun.) are not necessary and detract from the purpose of this section.

**Observations & Data**

    This section should include only those things that you saw, heard, touched, or smelled (taste is out since we never taste anything in a science lab). This includes both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (sensual, *not emotional*) observations. Quantitative observations are best presented in data tables. Qualitative observations may be organized in table form or paragraph form.    
    The goal of this section is to present the data that was collected in the activity in a clear and easily understood format. Units are necessary for any measurement. If you are unsure about whether something should be included in the data section, ask yourself "How did I get this piece of information? What instrument did I use to collect this information?" If you are giving a value that you did not measure directly (such as density) it should not be included as data.

**Analysis of Data**

    This is the section where you will show any calculations that you made using the data you collected. Give the formula you will use for each *type* of calculation. You should show which measurements you are plugging into each calculation and then show the solution. Once you have shown a sample calculation, you may use a data table to show other calculated values of the same type. This is also the appropriate place to explain how the measurements relate to each other. This is the proper place to discuss anything that happened during the activity that may have affected your measurements.

**Conclusions**

    This is the section of your report where you discuss how the purpose of the activity relates to the analysis of your data. In other words, what did you learn. Stick to the facts, do not comment on whether or not you enjoyed the activity. Be specific in your statements. If the results of the activity were not satisfactory, suggest how the activity could be improved to give better data. Did the activity raise questions that cannot be answered with the data you collected? This is the place to mention them. Remember, conclusions are connections that are not obvious on the surface.

**Finishing touches**

1. Be sure you have filled in the information in the header. Give your  
   name, your partner's name and the date you did the activity.

2. Proofread one last time to be sure that you have used correct  
    grammar and punctuation. Remember that Spell Check on the  
    computer will not catch a word that is *used* incorrectly if it is  
    *spelled* correctly (there-their).

3. You can use the grammar check to help you with the technical style  
    of writing. Open the Tools menu and select Options. Click on the  
    Spelling & Grammar tab and find the Writing style menu (near the  
    bottom right corner). It is probably set on Standard. Open the  
    drop-down menu and select Technical. Click OK. Open the Tools  
    menu again and select Spelling and Grammar. The Grammar Checker  
    will offer suggestions to formalize your writing in the technical  
    style. When you are finished, reset the Writing Style to Standard.