Guidelines for Reporting Laboratory Work

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Reports will emphasize experimental work and concisely summarize that work through a discursive reporting style that expresses your individual grasp and understanding. They will normally consist of the following items:

1. A cover sheet with the usual information (layout is up to you): Experiment title; class; student's name; instructor's name and due date. If you worked with a second student, you should note your partner’s name.

2. The report itself, consisting of an orienting introduction, body and conclusion(s).

3. Supporting engineering notes (see separate handout regarding their purpose and content).

Each student must individually prepare their own reports, which must be organized, neat and legible; computer generated typed work is preferred but not mandatory. Each report should be complete, thorough, understandable and literate. You may use a concise summary style with clear discussions included where necessary. Key your major block headings to correlate with the system used in the lab assignment. There is no minimum length requirement. Introduce the lab generally and, where applicable, for each task specifically. You should include a well-drawn and labeled engineering schematic (not a wiring diagram) for each significant circuit investigated. Scope and depth of what you report on depends on what you were asked to do, learn or become familiar with.

Documentation:

Use good drafting practice when producing figures, graphs, drawings or schematics and label them for easy reference.

You may use the Xilinx Schematic Editor to prepare schematics, or they may be drawn by hand. They should always be labeled and referenced in your report. Graphics requiring drawn straight lines should be done with a straight-edge where possible (resistors for example can be drawn freehand). Well-drawn free-hand sketches are permissible for schematics, but a template is encouraged, especially for bodies like logic symbols (typically 1/2 or 3/8 scale).

Space must be provided in the flow of your discussion for any tables or figures. Reports are much easier to read and follow when done this way. Do not collect figures and drawings in a single appendix at the end of the report.

If your engineering notes are clear and understandable, you can reference them. If they aren’t then transcribe the relevant sections into your report.
Notes on style and perspective:

Remember, you are reporting on something done in the past. Therefore, most of what you write will be expressed in the past tense. To aid you in resolving questions about tenses, the following summary should be helpful:

1. Experimental facts should always be given in the past tense.

2. Discussions or remarks about the presentation of data should mainly be in the present tense.

3. Discussions of results can be in both the present and past tenses, shifting back and forth from experimental facts to the presentation.

4. Any specific conclusions or deductions should be expressed in the past tense, general truths in the present tense.

Grading will be based on completeness, clarity, understanding and justification of results.