

6.7 Writing up

Whilst it is important that learners don't write up too soon, it is also important that they don't leave everything until the last moment. The final report must be 4500–5000 words in length so they should try to keep their early drafts under control. Although careful editing will help to reduce the word count, significantly cutting down a text is never easy and can take a great deal of time. Supervisors and candidates also need to remember that the upper limit of 5000 words is absolute and the supervisor is not permitted to mark beyond this point. Footnotes and bibliography are not included in this limit. Learners should not attempt to include substantive argument in footnotes as this will detract from the effectiveness of the report as a whole.

Section 4.4 of the Global Perspectives & Research (9239) syllabus is the necessary starting point for any consideration of the structure and content of the Cambridge Research Report, and teachers and supervisors who are involved with it, as well as learners, should consult this carefully. Beyond this, however, is important not to be too prescriptive about the structure of the Cambridge Research Report: it is desirable that the learner reflects upon this for themselves and develops the most appropriate structure for their own question and the nature of their project.

Having said this, there are some things worth saying about structure. Learners will have already had some experience of essay-writing for Component 2 and should reflect on this when identifying some generic elements of good practice.

We can summarise these requirements as follows:

- Introduction
- Description and justification of research methods and methodology
- Analysis and evaluation of relevant perspectives
- Conclusion

The report will need to be followed by a bibliography: a thorough list of all of the resources used in the research, set out using appropriate academic conventions. As stated above, this is not included in the word count.

NB Evaluation of sources and evidence is integral to any research report so must be carried out in the main body of the text, not tucked away in footnotes.

Learners should remember that they are not writing a definitive study but honestly trying to reach a judgement based on the evidence studied. They should be true to themselves and not attempt to write what they think the reader will want to see but all views should be consistent with the evidence considered. Without this they will just be asserting or relying on unsupported opinion. This would be contrary to everything learnt on the journey along the Critical Path.

This constitutes an appropriate generic structure for the Cambridge Research Report which also matches the expectations of the mark scheme. However, within this learners will have to make their own structuring decisions and discuss them with their supervisors in order to take account of the specific focus of their own question and the arguments and evidence they have located.