

How to Write an Abstract

An abstract is a short summary of your completed research. The abstract presents only the essential information about your project. In 250 words or less, it describes the objective (thesis statement), methods, and conclusions of your paper. The wording is direct, with no information repeated. It does not include background information, descriptions of methods, literature reviews, or references to other works.

However, it's important to note that the weight accorded to the different components can vary by discipline. For models, try to find abstracts of research that is similar to your research.

Tips:

- Write the abstract only when the document is finished. Abstracts written before then are just previews.
- If you are forced to write an abstract before the document is completed, think about its purpose and write a topic sentence. Keep in mind that you'll need to rewrite the abstract when the document is finished because it will no longer accurately reflect the contents of the document.
- Before starting the abstract, list your thoughts on the document. Group related items together. Prioritize the list and put the most important group first. The first few groups form the core of the topic sentence. The rest lead to supporting sentences.
- If you can't create a topic sentence, write the supporting sentences first. The topic sentence may then become obvious.
- Write for an audience not necessarily up to speed in your subject area. This is important because you never know who will read your abstract.
- Choose acronyms, abbreviations, and technical terms carefully as they may confuse many readers.
- Define the scope of the project in the abstract.
- Reread your abstract after several days have passed.
- Remove all superfluous information.

Don'ts of Abstract Writing

- Don't cite the sections of the paper.
- Don't include references to the literature and to figures and tables.
- Don't use abbreviations.
- Don't add new information.
- Don't add superfluous information.
- Don't add opinions.
- Don't repeat information.
- Don't repeat the article title.