

How to Write an Abstract

An abstract is a concise, stand-alone statement that conveys the essential information contained in an article, book, research paper, or document. Written in a direct non-repetitive style, the abstract should:

- Identify the problem (research question of thesis) investigated.
- Describe the scope or method of investigation.
- Summarize the results.
- State the conclusion(s).

Writing the Abstract:

1. Highlight the sentences in the paper that detail the problem (objective) investigated.
2. Highlight the research question (or thesis).
3. Identify information (phrases, key words) that shows the scope and sequence of the investigation-identify but do not explain.
4. Condense the conclusion into a few concise sentences.

Words of Advice:

- 1) For the first draft, don't worry about length. Just try to cover all the important components that are required in the abstract. Use all the information that highlighted and identified as you read through the essay (or article).
- 2) Take a word count before you begin to edit.
- 3) Begin editing by deleting words, phrases and sentences that are less important or provide more explanation than necessary.
- 4) Look for places where sentences can be combined to omit extra words or condense idea.
- 5) Delete unnecessary background information.
- 6) Do not use jargon, abbreviations, direct quotes or citations.
- 7) Avoid writing in the first person (I). Rather than saying, "In this essay I discuss...", try a more formal approach by starting your abstract with an opening similar to:
 - This essay discusses the effects of ... Specifically, this paper investigates (restate research question)..."
 - "This essay examines how ... It attempts to answer the question..."
- 8) Write to the required word count. If a 300 word abstract is required, get as close to the required number of words as possible.