

ABSTRACTS

Abstracts

An abstract is **a short summary of a larger work**, such as a dissertation or research paper, and is an important way of promoting your own academic research. Its purpose is **to offer the reader a condensed overview of the main points** contained within your whole text.

Think of your potential audience as you write your abstract: it should allow your reader to quickly identify what your research topic entails and will, ideally, entice them to read the full paper.

TOP TIP

It is always advisable to look at abstracts of research in your area on which to model your own.

What should it include?

The format of your abstract **will depend on the specific discipline** in which you are working. Generally, all abstracts cover reason and problem. You can begin to structure an abstract by focusing on the following **five sections**:

Reason

- **Why** are you choosing this research topic?
- **Why** is it important and why might a reader be interested to read the full text?

Problem

- **What problem** does this work attempt to solve?
- **What is the main argument** or hypothesis?
- **Are there specific limitations** on the research thesis?

Methodology

- **What kind of evidence are you using** to prove your main claim?
- **Have you used particular scientific or theoretical models**, for example, or have you analysed a specific set of primary sources?

Results

An abstract of a scientific work **may include specific data** that indicates the results of the project. Other abstracts **may discuss the findings in a more general way**.

Implications

- **How does this work add to the existing body of knowledge** on the topic?
- **How is your paper contributing** to what is already known?
- **Are there any practical or theoretical applications from your findings** or are there any **implications for future** research?

TOP TIP

Avoid including the following:

- ✗ New information
- ✗ Undefined abbreviations
- ✗ Discussion of literature
- ✓ Unnecessary detail about the methodology

Useful Links

- <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/writing-an-abstract>
- <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/abstract>
- https://services.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/471274/Writing_an_Abstract_Update_051112.pdf
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/abstract/>
- <https://www.aises.org/sites/default/files/documents/National%20Conference/Abstract%20Guidelines%20and%20Samples.pdf>

Other Relevant Online PDFs

- Time Management
- Academic Writing Essentials
- Editing and Proofreading
- Planning your Dissertation