

Abstract

Definition

The **abstract** is a:

- brief summary of the principal findings of the experiment.
- stand-alone, self-contained document.

Contents

The abstract should *briefly* state:

- the purpose of the research or the research problem including a very short background (introduction),
- how the problem was studied (methods),
- the principal findings, including statistical analyses (results), and
- what the findings mean (discussion and conclusions).

While it is difficult to be both concise and descriptive at the same time, that is exactly what you should strive for when writing an abstract. Say only what is essential, using no more words than necessary to convey the meaning.

Examine every word carefully.

Rules

The abstract should be one or two paragraphs and no more than 250 words.

The abstract should:

- **not** include subheadings such as "Purpose" or "Results."
- **not** use first person, e.g., "I."
- **not** emphasize minor details.
- **not** contain bibliographic references, figures, or tables.
- **not** use jargon or abbreviations (*unless* they are commonly used and do not require explanation, e.g., DNA or UV light) .