



Writing Centre

Abstracts

We often encounter abstracts at the beginning of research papers.

An abstract summarizes, in **under 300 words**, the major aspects of a paper.

They tell us the **purpose, problem, method, results** and **conclusion** of the work.

It helps the reader decide if they want to read the entirety of the paper or move on to another source.

Abstracts address **two** basic questions: *what* is this paper about, and *does* this paper work for my research?

Since it's just a summary of the work you've already done, don't worry! It's easier than you think!

What is included in an abstract?

- The overall purpose and the problems/questions you explored;
- The basic design of the study;
- The major findings;
- A brief summary of your interpretation/conclusions.

When you begin composing...

- Take whole sentences or key terms from each section and put them in a sequence that summarizes the paper;
- Revise or add connecting words or phrases to help with flow;
- Make sure the information agrees with what you have written in the paper.

How do you know if your abstract is complete?

- Imagine that you haven't read your paper before, or that you are a researcher doing a similar study:
 - If your abstract was the only part of the paper that you could read, is there enough information?
 - Does it cover all major aspects?
 - If you are left with questions or gaps, then you know you need to add more information.

DO:	DO NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in the active voice, in past tense, and in third person. • Make it complete enough to stand alone from the rest of the paper. • Use key words from the document. • Write it last since it is a summary of the whole paper. • Put it on a standalone page including the preexisting header. • Centre “Abstract” (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or quotation marks). • <i>Option:</i> put keywords after the abstract. Indent as a new paragraph, type <i>Keywords:</i> in italics, then list the keywords. See example for reference. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include lengthy background information. • Reference other literature. • Use abbreviations, jargon or confusing terms. You’ll need to explain them further if you include them, and there isn’t enough room for that. • Insert an image, illustration, figure, or table or make references to them. • Include the title. The abstract will be read alongside the title, so you don’t need to rephrase it. • Refer to information that is <i>not</i> in the body of the paper. • Use <i>I</i> or <i>we</i>.

Example formatting (APA):

PURDUE ONLINE WRITING LAB SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

2

Abstract

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Donec non pretium ante.

Phasellus tincidunt tristique est vitae tempor. Curabitur eros orci, accumsan vel porttitor vel, dignissim ac sem. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per conubia nostra, per inceptos himenaeos. Vivamus sagittis mauris eget augue bibendum iaculis. Maecenas rutrum, diam non condimentum convallis, arcu dolor suscipit justo, ultrices tincidunt enim turpis vel felis. Nullam fringilla fermentum orci, at euismod nibh blandit faucibus. Nam ultricies adipiscing orci vitae adipiscing. Cras pretium ipsum vitae orci tincidunt dapibus et nec diam. Nullam in tellus vel turpis sagittis posuere. Nam pellentesque laoreet magna sit amet adipiscing. Pellentesque ante arcu, porta eget dignissim ut, rhoncus eget est. Sed euismod, quam eu viverra pretium, magna velit dignissim lectus, sed dictum nisi mauris a arcu. Curabitur sit amet est aliquet turpis interdum ornare. In placerat vestibulum commodo. Nulla vitae arcu risus. Duis vel urna ut dolor pulvinar placerat. Aliquam sagittis pulvinar ultricies.

Keywords: lorem ipsum, nulla vitae

Online Resources:

- USC Libraries Research Guides: Organizing Your Social Science Research Paper: 3. The Abstract
- Owl Purdue: APA, General Format.