

## **ABSTRACT**

An abstract is a condensed version of a longer piece of writing that highlights the major points covered, concisely describes the content and scope of the writing, and reviews the writing's contents in abbreviated form. Abstracts are short statements that briefly summarize an article or scholarly document. Abstracts are like the blurbs on the back covers of novels. Abstracts are important parts of academic assignments, most often, reports and research papers. The abstract can be read to get a quick overview. It tells the reader what to expect in the work and it should be based on everything you have written.

### **TYPES OF ABSTRACT: DESCRIPTIVE**

There are two main types of abstract: the (1) descriptive and the (2) informative abstract. The type of abstract you write depends on your discipline area.

Descriptive abstracts are generally used for humanities and social science papers or psychology essays. This type of abstract is usually very short (100-150 words). A descriptive abstract is the summary of work you have already completed or work you are proposing. The abstract should give readers a short, concise snapshot of the work as a whole - not just how it starts. Remember that the readers of your abstract will sometimes not read the paper as a whole, so in this short document you need to give them an overall picture of your work.

Most descriptive abstracts have certain key parts in common. They are:

- Background
- Purpose (the author's reason for writing, the authors main idea)
- Particular interest/focus of paper
- Overview of contents

When composing a descriptive abstract make sure you remember the following suggestions: you tell readers what information the report, article, or paper contains; include the purpose, methods, and scope of the report, article, or paper; do not

provide results, conclusions, or recommendations; introduce the subject to readers, who must then read the report, article, or paper to find out the author's results, conclusions, or recommendations.

### **TYPES OF ABSTRACT: INFORMATIVE**

Informative abstracts are generally used for science, engineering or psychology reports. You must get the essence of what your report is about, usually in about 200 words. Most informative abstracts also have key parts in common. Each of these parts might consist of 1-2 sentences. The parts include:

- Background
- Purpose of research
- Method used
- Findings/results
- Conclusion

When composing an informative abstract make sure you remember the following suggestions: you communicate specific information from the report, article, or paper; include the purpose, methods, and scope of the report, article, or paper; provide the report, article, or paper's results, conclusions, and recommendations.

Make your abstracts short - from a paragraph to a page or two, depending upon the length of the original work being abstracted. Usually informative abstracts are 10% or less of the length of the original piece; allow readers to decide whether they want to read the report, article, or paper.

### **KEY-WORDS**

The practice of using key words in an abstract is vital because of today's electronic information retrieval systems. Titles and abstracts are filed electronically, and key words are put in electronic storage. When people search for information, they enter key words related to the subject, and the computer finds the titles of articles, papers, and reports containing those key words. Thus, an abstract must contain key

words about what is essential in an article, paper, or report so that someone else can retrieve information from it.

## **A GOOD ABSTRACT**

### **Summing up:**

1. A good abstract uses one or more well-developed paragraphs; these are unified, coherent, concise and able to stand alone as a unit of information.
2. An introduction/body/conclusion structure is typical; an abstract covers all the essential academic elements of the full-length paper, namely the background, purpose, focus, methods, results and conclusions.
3. No information not included in the paper is needed.
4. You must write it in plain English and make it understandable to a wider audience, as well as to your discipline-specific audience.
5. Scientists often use Passive Voice in order to report on findings, to downplay the author and emphasize the information focusing on the issues rather than people.
6. A good abstract uses the language of the original paper, often in a more simplified form for the more general readership.
7. It usually does not include any referencing.
8. In publications such as journals, an abstract is found at the beginning of the text, but in academic assignments, it is placed on a separate preliminary page.
9. A good abstract follows strictly the chronology of the article, paper, or report.
10. It provides logical connections (or transitions) between the information included.

## **ABSTRACT VS INTRODUCTION**

Students are sometimes confused about the difference between an abstract and an introduction. In fact, they are different pieces of writing with different aims and key parts. The following table will briefly describe these differences in the case of a research paper.

### **Abstract**

presents the essence of the whole paper. It summarizes briefly the whole paper including the conclusions.

It should cover the following academic elements:

- Background
- Purpose and focus
- Methods
- Results (also called 'Findings')
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Introduces the paper and foregrounds issues for discussion.

It should cover the following academic elements:

- Background
- Purpose
- Proposition (also called 'Point of View' or 'Thesis' statement)
- Outline of key issues
- Scope

## **ABSTRACT VS REVIEW**

## **Abstract**

presents the essence of the whole paper. It summarizes briefly the whole paper including the conclusions.

It should cover the following academic elements:

- Background
- Purpose and focus
- Methods
- Results (also called 'Findings')
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

## **Review**

is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book/article, not a retelling.

It should focus on the purpose, content, and authority of writing. It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed.

It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluate how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation.

A review can be as short as 50-100 words, or as long as 1500 words, depending on the purpose of the review.

