



## Research Abstracts

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### Definition and Purposes of Research Abstracts

A research abstract is a short summary of your completed research and should include the focus/question, the approach, the findings and the conclusions. This information helps readers use the abstract for specific purposes: journal article abstracts help researchers locate materials that are relevant to their research from among published papers, and allow researchers to learn about unfamiliar fields; and conference abstracts help researchers decide which sessions to attend. Research abstracts are also used for indexing the research article; they present the key findings of the research.

Keeping these functions in mind when writing your abstract, you should ask yourself:

- Why would another researcher be interested in this research?
- What are the most important aspects of the research? What does a reader need to know about the research?
- What information will the reader need in order to understand the most important aspects of the research?

### Basic Components

These are several basic components of an abstract in any discipline:

1. General purpose and Motivation: Why should we care about the research question and the answer? What is known already?
2. Problem statement: What question are you trying to answer? What is unknown? What knowledge gaps does your research fill? What are the specific goals of your study? What is your hypothesis?
3. Approach: How did you go about answering the question? What is your research design/approach? (What did you actually do to get your results? e.g., analyzed three novels, completed a series of five oil paintings, interviewed seventeen students)
4. Results: What is the answer to your research question? What did you learn/invent/create?
5. Conclusions: What are the implications of your answer?

Note: Different disciplines emphasize different components, so find abstracts of research in your field of study, analyze them, and model your abstract after them.

### Getting started

To write your research abstract, start by writing 6-10 sentences that include the following information:

1. One-two sentences providing background that introduces the topic and motivates the research, and that describes the importance/significance of the research question
2. One sentence that describes what is unknown.
3. One sentence that states the purpose of your study and your hypotheses.
4. One-two sentences describing how you tested your hypothesis. (Be very brief.)
5. One-two sentences presenting your results. Include actual data when possible.
6. One-two sentences on interpretation of results and broader implications. Include the significance of your answer and the contribution you have made to your field of study.