

ABSTRACTS

What is an Abstract?

An abstract is a stand-alone statement that briefly conveys the essential information of a paper, article, document or book; presents the objective, methods, results, and conclusions of a research project; has a brief, non-repetitive style.

Although an abstract appears as the first section of a paper, it should be written last. You need to have completed all other sections before you can select and summarize the essential information from those sections.

Many abstracts are published without the complete paper in abstract journals or online databases. Thus, an abstract might serve as the only means by which a researcher determines what information a paper contains. Moreover, a researcher might make a decision whether to read the paper or not based on the abstract alone. Because of this need for self-contained compactness, an abstract must convey the essential results of a paper.

Many publications have a required style for abstracts; the *Guidelines for Authors* provided by the publisher will provide specific instructions. This document describes general guidelines.

What Goes into an Abstract?

In doing any research, a researcher has an objective, uses methods, obtains results, and draws conclusions. In writing the paper to describe the research, an author might discuss background information, review relevant literature, and detail procedures and methodologies. However, an abstract of the paper SHOULD describe the objective, methods, results, and conclusions. An abstract should NOT contain background information or a literature review, and it should AVOID reference to other literatures.

What is the Style of an Abstract?

The style of an abstract should be concise and clear. Readers do not expect the abstract to have the same sentence structure flow of a paper. Rather, the abstract's wording should be very direct.