



### Abstracts - Best Practices

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<b>Definition</b>	The abstract is a summary that communicates the main ideas of a paper to potential readers. It is not a forward or an introduction to the project, nor is it a supplement to the project (as it should not contain new information).
<b>Length</b>	The abstract is usually between 100 and 250 words. Longer projects (e.g., theses and dissertations) can have abstracts up to 350 words. Check submission guidelines for a specific word count requirement.
<b>Content</b>	<p>The abstract should cover all the sections included in the project. Typically, this includes summaries of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Research topic</b> (or questions or thesis): the main idea of the paper or the problem(s)/question(s) the paper addresses.</li><li>• <b>Background</b> (or literature review): brief contextual information on the topic and/or a summary of relevant published research.</li><li>• <b>Method</b>: the process through which the research data was collected (i.e. surveys, focus groups, algorithms).</li><li>• <b>Results</b>: the findings of the study.</li><li>• <b>Conclusions</b> (or discussion): the answers to the original research question(s), and the interpretation and significance of the results.</li></ul> <p>The abstract usually gives most weight to the findings (results) of the research. However, depending on the project, the method and conclusions may also be given extra attention.</p>
<b>Some Helpful Suggestions</b>	<p>Here are some key points to keep in mind as you work on your abstract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look at other abstracts for articles in your field to get an idea of what it should look like.</li><li>• The abstract should be able to convey your main ideas without the reader needing to read the paper.</li><li>• Do not reuse written portions of your project; you should write your abstract using original wording.</li><li>• Do not present the research of other scholars unless your project is specifically about another's work (such as an analysis or critique); there should not be anything in your abstract that you need to cite.</li><li>• Even though the abstract is a summary, make sure you use precise, descriptive information rather than broad, sweeping statements.</li><li>• Follow the same outline as your project; do not present the material in a different order.</li></ul>