**What is an abstract?**

An abstract is a *self-contained summary* of a project that is *discipline-specific*, *audience-specific*, and includes *searchable keywords*.

Abstracts can be used to find relevant research in a database or collection (indexing) and to help the reader to decide if an article is useful for a project (selection). Additionally it helps to present the results and significance of a research project (communication).

Writing an abstract should be a continuing process: you may write one abstract when you propose a project and another when the project is completed.

The exact form of your abstract will vary depending on your field of study and depending on how far along your research has progressed.

**What goes into an abstract/types of information included in an abstract?**

* Motivation/Significance
  + Why are you conducting your research? Why is this project important?
* Problem/Purpose
  + What specific problem(s)/issue(s) are you trying to solve with your research?
* Methodology
  + What methods and resources are you using to arrive at your solution(s)?
* Conclusion/Results
  + What did you find? What can you conclude as a result of your research?

* Implications
  + What did you learn? What is new to our understanding of the problem? What can this tell us about the nature of the problem or about the directions in which future research should proceed?

**Tips for writing abstracts:**

* Determine your primary audience.
* Establish the importance of your project.
* Be clear and concise, and use language suitable to your audience
* Discuss your abstract with your faculty mentor. (He or she is there to help guide you through all of the stages of your project, so keep in touch regularly.)

**Templates**

* Templates for showing the motivation/significance of your research
* Previous studies have shown \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, however\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is a growing problem that has yet to be addressed.
* Templates for communicating the problem/purpose of your project
* We are going to examine\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-
* The objective of this research is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-
* Templates for showing the methodology of your project
* In order to test the hypothesis that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we assessed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ does not account for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we instead used \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* I used \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to investigate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Templates for showing the conclusion or results of your research
* The results of this investigation indicate \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* The data suggests /hints / implies \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Templates for showing the implications of your project
* These findings challenge the work of earlier researchers, who tended to assume that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* These conclusions will have significant applications in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ as well as in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Ultimately, what is at stake here is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Further work in this area may lead to the development of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Examples of Strong Verbs**

* Verbs for making a claim

argue insist assert observe believe

remind us claim report emphasize suggest

* Verbs for expressing agreement

acknowledge endorse admire extol agree verify

praise celebrate the fact that reaffirm corroborate support do not deny

* Verbs for questioning or disagreeing

complain qualify complicate question contend refute

contradict reject deny renounce deplore the tendency to repudiate

* Verbs for making recommendations

advocate implore call for plead demand

recommend encourage urge exhort warn

**Examples of words/phrases to use with caution:**

“(It is) common knowledge” “maybe” “perhaps” “because”

**Things to ask your advisor:**

About search engines; when to use jargon specific terminology; type of phrasing (whether active or passive voice); which sample journals to read from; specific writing style.

**Web resources** **for writing abstracts:**(Be aware that these web resources are not all in agreement with each other.)  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/656/1/>  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/752/04/>  
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/handouts-demos/specific-writing-assignments/abstracts>  
[http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html](http://www.ece.cmu.edu/%7Ekoopman/essays/abstract.html)

**Abstracts from previous Emerging Scholar projects:**

<http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/academics/deptsites/schoolofartsandsciences/emerging.shtml>

**Feel free to contact us if you have any questions**:

<http://tinyurl.com/CityTechWAC>