How to Write an Abstract

The abstract is the reader's first encounter with your paper, and is the chief

means by which scientists decide which research reports to read in there

entirety. The abstract should provide a brief summary of the findings of the

paper, and should be a stand-alone document that can be understood without

reading the paper.

**The abstract is a very brief overview of your ENTIRE study. It tells the reader**

**WHAT you did, WHY you did it, HOW you did it, WHAT you found, and WHAT**

**it means.** The abstract should briefly state the purpose of the research 28

(introduction), how the problem was studied (methods), the principal findings (results), and what the findings mean (discussion and conclusion). It is important to be descriptive but concise--say only what is essential, using

no more words than necessary to convey meaning. The abstract must be

Single-spaced! Your abstract should contain no more than 150 words making

up one paragraph. The abstract should be written in the PAST TENSE. The

abstract is usually the last part of the research paper to be written.

Abstract Worksheet Example

The Abstract Worksheet that follows may be used to help you prepare the

first draft of your abstract. The sequence of sentences in the Abstract

Worksheet is ordered in a logical fashion, beginning with an introduction and

followed by your hypothesis, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.

Think of the most important items that crystallize each part of your project.

Leave out unimportant details. Use the Abstract Worksheet, to write one or

two sentences that summarize each section. For your final draft, make sure

the abstract "flows" logically. Give it to a friend to read. Ask them to tell you

what they think you actually did and what you found. Revise as necessary.

Abstract Worksheet

Use one or two concise sentences to summarize the most important aspects

of your project for each section listed below.

**Introduction (What is this project about? Why is this project interesting or**

**important?)**

**Hypothesis (What did you think you would find? Why?)**

**Methods (Briefly explain your procedure.)**

**Results (What did you find when you performed your experiment?)**

**Discussion (Are your results consistent with your initial hypothesis? Why or**

**why not?)**

**Conclusion (What is your interpretation of what these results mean? Why**

**should anyone become excited about or interested in your findings?)**