

Guidelines for writing an abstract

Due March 27, at 12pm by email to the instructor

The abstract briefly states the research problem or research field (Introduction), how the problem was studied (Methods), what was discovered (Results), and how the results might be interpreted (Conclusion). Acronyms or abbreviations may be used; however, they should be spelled out the first time used and not used in the title. To introduce acronyms or abbreviations, use the full name followed by the acronym used in parenthesis (e.g., Department of Energy (DOE).) The abstract should serve as a “stand alone” document because it may be the only part of the paper some reviewers read. Do not refer to sections in the research paper or citations. An abstract should present information in the order in which it will appear within the paper.

1 What are the style constraints for the abstract?

- Your abstract should be a single paragraph and should be concise.
- Length is limited to a maximum of 2500 characters including spaces.
- Jargon or acronyms must be spelled out or defined the first time each is used.
- An abstract should stand on its own, and not refer to something in the body of the paper, such as a figure, table or portions of the paper.
- Results are the focus of an abstract.
- Limit background information to a sentence or two.
- What you report in an abstract must be consistent with what you report in the paper.
- Correct spelling, clarity of sentences and phrases, and proper reporting of quantities (proper units, significant figures) are just as important in an abstract as anywhere else.
- Verb tense is important. To summarize work completed, use past tense. To present facts, use present tense.
- Language should be formal, meaning 3rd person, no contractions and no colloquialisms.
- Bibliography or citations are not included in the abstract.