

Part I: Writing your “Abstract” Section

Here you will write a short summary (meaning you write this **AFTER** you have completed your research) of your entire research. The key word is “short.” In one paragraph you will write a brief summary of what you did (who, what, when, where, and why), your significant results and your conclusions. In other words, the abstract contains elements from each section of the paper.

In order to do this section well, you will need to write, rewrite, and rewrite in order to condense it to its proper format and length.

Specifics:

1. Be concise and exact.
2. Avoid jargon or any technical terms that most readers won't understand.
3. Include a statement of the problem/question and hypothesis.
4. Try to keep the abstract less than 250 words.
5. Use scientific names of organisms if appropriate.
6. It should be able to stand alone. In other words, people should be able to read the abstract and get a good idea as to what your research covered.

Tip:

For your first draft, don't be overly concerned about the length. Just make sure you include all the key information. Then take your draft and start crossing out words, phrases, and sentences that are less important than others. Look for places where you can combine sentences in ways that shorten the total length. Put it aside for a while, then come back and re-read your draft. With a fresh eye, you'll probably find new places to cut. Soon enough you will have a tightly written abstract.