

How to Write an Abstract

1. An abstract is not just a copy of your introduction.
2. An abstract is a summary of your paper or thesis.
3. The abstract is the first thing a reader reads; as such, it gives an indication of the quality of your writing.
4. The abstract gives readers a quick idea of the basic content of the paper. It should be a self-contained document and there should be no need to look elsewhere in the paper for an understanding of what is said in the abstract.
5. For the average paper the abstract is around 100 to 120 words. For a thesis it may be slightly longer.
6. The abstract should be very concise - the maximum length being 50% of one page (outside of the header formatting and keywords line). This means you will need to use the most precise and relevant words to best express the content of the abstract.
7. Abstracts that are too long must be re-written.
8. Use your main topic statement to open the abstract and close with your summarizing statement.
9. The body of your abstract is best created by summarizing your major theme for each section of the paper: your topic sentences should help with this. The end result should be clear and concise, yet give the scope of your paper.
10. A quick way to create an abstract is to take the topic sentence from each paragraph, link them together and then edit the final result to make sure it flows. If your paragraphs have been logically organized, the abstract should also connect together logically.
11. The abstract is written in past tense and uses third person.
12. Format the abstract using APA style: The abstract is on the second page of your paper after the title page. Center the word, "Abstract" on the first line. Use one inch margins, 12 point font, and double spacing consistent with the rest of the paper. Write the abstract using block format, which means no indentation for the single paragraph.

