We often encounter abstracts at the beginning of research papers. An abstract summarizes, in under 300 words, the major aspects of a paper. They tell us the purpose, problem, method, results and conclusion of the work. It helps the reader decide if they want to read the entirety of the paper or move on to another source. Abstracts address two basic questions: what is this paper about, and does this paper work for my research?

Since it’s just a summary of the work you’ve already done, don’t worry! It’s easier than you think!

What is included in an abstract?

- The overall purpose and the problems/questions you explored;
- The basic design of the study;
- The major findings;
- A brief summary of your interpretation/conclusions.

When you begin composing...

- Take whole sentences or key terms from each section and put them in a sequence that summarizes the paper;
- Revise or add connecting words or phrases to help with flow;
- Make sure the information agrees with what you have written in the paper.

How do you know if your abstract is complete?

- Imagine that you haven’t read your paper before, or that you are a researcher doing a similar study:
  - If your abstract was the only part of the paper that you could read, is there enough information?
  - Does it cover all major aspects?
  - If you are left with questions or gaps, then you know you need to add more information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO:</strong></th>
<th><strong>DO NOT:</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Write in the active voice, in past tense, and in third person.</td>
<td>• Include lengthy background information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make it complete enough to stand alone from the rest of the paper.</td>
<td>• Reference other literature.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use key words from the document.</td>
<td>• Use abbreviations, jargon or confusing terms. You’ll need to explain</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Write it last since it is a summary of the whole paper.</td>
<td>them further if you include them, and there isn’t enough room for that.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Put it on a standalone page including the preexisting header.</td>
<td>• Insert an image, illustration, figure, or table or make references to</td>
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<td>• Centre “Abstract” (no bold, formatting, italics, underlining, or</td>
<td>them.</td>
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<td>quotation marks).</td>
<td>• Include the title. The abstract will be read alongside the title, so you</td>
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<td>• Option: put keywords after the abstract.</td>
<td>don’t need to rephrase it.</td>
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<td>Indent as a new paragraph, type <em>Keywords:</em> in italics, then list the</td>
<td>• Refer to information that is <em>not</em> in the body of the paper.</td>
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<td>keywords. See example for reference.</td>
<td>• Use <em>I</em> or <em>we</em>.</td>
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**Example formatting (APA):**

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PURDUE ONLINE WRITING LAB SAMPLE TITLE PAGE

Abstract
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Donec non pretium ante.
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placerat. Aliquam sagittis pulvinar ultricies.

Keywords: lorem ipsum, nulla vitae
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**Online Resources:**

- Owl Purdue: APA, General Format.