

# Writing an abstract

**Busi Kunene**

**PhD, MCur, BCur, RAdv M&N, RM, RN**

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# **Content of the workshop**

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# What is an abstract

- Abstract is Latin word “abstractum” meaning condensed form of longer piece of writing.
- A good one has well developed paragraphs that are coherent and concise.
- It should be able to stand alone as a unit of information
- Cover all the essential academic elements of full length paper namely background, purpose, focus, method and conclusions

# What is an abstract?

- It is a self-contained,
- short, and
- powerful statement that describes larger work

Components vary according to discipline social science or scientific work may contain :

- the scope,
  - purpose,
  - results, and
  - contents of the work
- It contains key words found in the larger work, the abstract is an original document rather than an extracted passage

WHAT IS IT?



YOU SAID TO DO AN ABSTRACT



# Why an abstract

- It is the way of selling your entire work- forcing the person to leave everything else and get your paper/book
- The two most important reason for an abstract
  - selection and
  - Indexing

# When do people write abstracts?

- when submitting articles to journals, especially online journals
- when applying for research grants
- when writing a book proposal
- when completing the Ph.D. dissertation or M.A. thesis
- when writing a proposal for a conference paper
- when writing a proposal for a book chapter

# Types of abstracts

- There are two main types of abstracts:
- **Descriptive**
- **Informative**

# Descriptive abstracts

- A descriptive abstract indicates the type of information found in the work
- It makes no judgments about the work, nor does it provide results or conclusions of the research.
- It does incorporate key words found in the text and may include the purpose, methods, and scope of the research.
- Essentially, the descriptive abstract describes the work being abstracted.
- Some people consider it an outline of the work, rather than a summary.
- Descriptive abstracts are usually very short—100

# Informative abstracts

- The majority of abstracts are informative.
- While they still do not critique or evaluate a work, they do more than describe it.
- A good informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself.
- It presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the complete article/paper/book
- informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself.
- An informative abstract includes the information that can be found in a descriptive abstract (purpose, methods, scope) but also includes the results and conclusions of the research and the recommendations of the author

# In summery

- A descriptive abstract briefly describes the longer work, while an informative abstract presents all the main arguments and important results.

# How to write an abstract – for a presentation

- Start after you have finish the paper
- Before you start take time to read the instruction especially if this is for the conference or symposium
- Know your audience – organizers and attendees always consider the experts in that field
- Be coincide, interesting descriptive or informative depending
- If there is template provided – use it and
- Focus on the number of words stipulated in the instruction

# How to write an abstract – paper / books

- Write your paper first and use this as a frame or guide for the abstract
- Begin your abstract on a new page before the paper
- Keep it short usually this is about 150 to 250 depending on the requirement of the journal or conference
- Structure the abstract in the same order as your paper
- Look at other abstracts in professional journals for examples of how to summarise your paper
- Write a rough draft of your abstract and reduce it as you edit
- Ask a friend to read over the abstract the idea is to revise and revise your draft

# How do I write an abstract?

- **Reason for writing:**

What is the importance of the research? Why would a reader be interested in the larger work?

- **Problem:**

What problem does this work attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim?

- **Methodology:**

An abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study. Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research.

- **Results:**

Again, an abstract of a scientific work may include specific data that indicates the results of the project. Other abstracts may discuss the findings in a more general way.

- **Implications:**

What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work? How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

(Reveal the results like )

# How not to write an abstract:

- Do not refer extensively to other works.
- Do not add information not contained in the original work.
- Do not define terms.

# If you are abstracting your own writing

- When abstracting your own work, it may be difficult to condense a piece of writing that you have agonized over for weeks (or months, or even years) into a 250-word statement or even less.
- There are some tricks that you could use to make it easier, however.

# Identify key terms:

- Search through the entire document for key terms that identify the purpose, scope
- Pay close attention to the Introduction (or Purpose) and the Conclusion (or Discussion) methods of the work
- be sure to incorporate the key terms

# Highlight key phrases and sentences:

- Instead of **cutting and pasting** the actual words,
- Try highlighting sentences or phrases that appear to be central to the work.
- In a separate document, rewrite the sentences and phrases in your own words.

# Don't look back:

- After reading the entire work, put it aside and write a paragraph about the work without referring to it.
- In the first draft, you may not remember all the key terms or the results, but you will remember what the main point of the work was. Remember not to include any information you did not get from the work being abstracted.
- **Revise, revise, revise**
- No matter what type of abstract you are writing, or whether you are abstracting your own work or someone else's, the most important step in writing an abstract is to revise early and often. When revising, delete all extraneous words and incorporate meaningful and powerful words. The idea is to be as clear and complete as possible in the shortest possible amount of space. The Word Count feature of Microsoft Word can help you keep track of how long your abstract is and help you hit your target length.

# Difference in experimental and meta-analysis abstract

## Experimental

- Begin by identifying the problem
- Describe the participants in the study
- Briefly describe the study method used
- Ethics
- Give the basic findings
- Provide any conclusions or implications of the study

## Meta-analysis/ literature review

- Describe the problem of interest
- Explain the criteria that were used to select the studies included in the paper
- Identify the participants of the studies
- Ethics
- Provide the main results
- Describe any conclusions or implications

# Abstract Writing

إرادة حمد  
By Eradah Hamad  
@EradahHamad

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