

## Abstracts

**1. An abstract precedes a document and provides readers with a summary (key points) of the longer text.** (Abstracts are shorter than executive summaries, which follow the table of contents, are longer than abstracts, and contain a persuasive focus to convey the validity of the document.)

**2. Abstracts commonly include the following information:**

- Purpose
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusions

**3. In general, there are two basic types of abstracts:**

**a. Descriptive abstract** - single paragraph preceding a document that summarizes the main topics without details such as quantitative information. Readers are given a general sense of the content of the document, the subdivisions of the documents, and how the material is developed. Notice the following abbreviated examples:

### Abbreviated Abstract for a **Technical Report**

An important contribution of this research is to .... Specifically, this study indicates that....  
Second, the research extends previous work by ....

### Abbreviated Abstract for a **Research Proposal**

The aim of this research proposal is to identify... The XXX behavior model of ...will provide the theoretical framework for the study. Variables on ...will be incorporated into the XXX model. Data will be obtained from a convenience sample (N=100) of ...adults with... Findings are predicted to indicate that ... will have an important influence on...

**b. Informative abstract** – Longer than a descriptive abstract (up to a page or 150 words), an informative abstract serves as a mini-version of a report or proposal so that readers can understand the main points without reading the entire document. (See the *APA Publication Manual*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, page 12 for guidelines.) Notice the following abbreviated example:

### Abstract

A survey of 50 first-year college students in an introductory composition class was conducted to identify common ..... The survey consisted of 5 questions regarding ... and the grades they received on... The study's hypothesis was .... Results showed that 43% of the students ..., whereas 90% of them ....

#### Sources:

American Psychological Association.. *Publication Manual*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: APA, 2005.  
Kirszner, Laurie G., and Stephen R. Mandell. *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006.  
Woolever, Kristin R. *Writing for the Technical Professions*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson, 2005.