

Help for Honors Students thinking About Conferences

Abstract: Here are some bits of advice found on the Web on how to write an abstract for your paper or presentation. An abstract is like a summary, but not exactly; the abstract should concentrate on informing the reader more than on interesting her in the topic. Omit most general, stage setting that you would include in the paper itself (instead of “Virginia Woolf was a early twentieth century English writer perhaps best known . . .” start with “A controversial theme in Virginia Woolf’s *A Room of . . .*”). Describe your methodology in a science abstract. In a literature paper mention the works on which you rely most heavily, the names of any theorist whose approach you use, and those critics whom you discuss most extensively. Also look at actual abstracts – from previous conferences, in journals in your field, etc.

-- Dr Robert Strikwerda, Honors and Gender Studies March 6, 2006

1. from Rudner, Lawrence M. & William D. Schafer (1999). How to write a scholarly research report. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 6(13).

Abstract - The abstract serves two major purposes: it helps a person decide whether to read the paper, and it provides the reader with a framework for understanding the paper if they decide to read it. Thus, your abstract should describe the most important aspects of the study within the word-limit provided by the journal. As appropriate for your research, try to include a statement of the problem, the people you studied, the dependent and independent variables, the instruments, the design, major findings, and conclusions. If pressed for space, concentrate on the problem and, especially, your findings.

2. Abstract (in APA style): The abstract is placed on a separate page (page 2). The word *Abstract* appears centered on the first line (not italics or quotation marks). Double-space the abstract but don't indent it. The abstract is a short, professional-sounding summary of the paper, not more than 960 characters long including spaces and punctuation. Abstracts often follow a set format: topic in the first sentence; then purpose, thesis, and scope; then kinds of sources used or data collected; and finally conclusions.

from Michael Harvey <http://nutsandbolts.washcoll.edu/apa.html#abstract>

3. Abstract: . . . for longer, more complex and technical papers abstracts are particularly useful. The abstract, often only 100 to 300 words, generally provides a broad overview and is never more than a page. It contains the essence, the main theme of the paper. It includes the research question posed, its significance, the methodology, and the main results or findings. Major arguments and their relationship to each other are mentioned. Footnotes or cited works are never listed in an abstract. Remember to take great care in composing the abstract. It's the first part of the paper the instructor reads. It must impress with a strong content, good style, and general aesthetic appeal. Never write it hastily or carelessly.

From Boston College

<http://www.bc.edu/libraries/research/howdoi/s-edupaper/#abstract>