

Poster abstract

Writing an abstract of a larger publication you have researched is a crucial skill for any profession. For the poster project, **please write a short (about 75 words), one-paragraph abstract** about your poster. This will be **due Monday, May 8 at 9:00 p.m.** The abstract must be submitted as a Word document or text attachment by e-mail to: tfurutani@sccd.ctc.edu (do clearly title the e-mail "GEL 103 poster abstract" — you aren't the only students submitting poster abstracts to me!)

Please check your e-mail on Friday, since I will be asking you to revise your abstract over the weekend if there are problems with it. The **revised** abstract (if needed) is due **Wednesday, May 10 at 9:00 p.m.**; the poster session is the next day. You may (though it is not necessary) include the abstract on your poster.

The format of the abstract should be as follows:

Author (that's you), college affiliation
TITLE (IN ALL CAPS)

Body of the abstract – this text should contain about seventy five words. Don't worry about indenting it or double-spacing it.

For instance:

J. Random Student, North Seattle Community College
WHALE EVOLUTION: BACK TO THE SEA

Whales evolved from a land mammal that readapted to sea life, not from a creature already living in the sea. This dramatic return to the sea is evidenced by the gradual loss of hind legs illustrated in the fossil record. Initially fully formed in their ungulate ancestors, the legs shortened, then became vestigial with the appearance of a massive tail for swimming, and now appear only in the embryos of modern whales.

I've included material from the following website in order to guide you:

<http://www.index.rdg.ac.uk/~kcshuwil/cme/abstract.html>

since you are not writing a paper, please modify the suggestions as necessary. In addition, the abstract should not contain any footnotes or references; it is meant to be a "stand-alone" work.

Writing informative abstracts

Abstracts are often the least considered but most important part of any paper. Most readers of a journal will read most of the abstracts, but very few will read the full papers. Perhaps 95% of readers will read *only* the abstract.

The need for abstracts to be terse often causes difficulty and can taint what is otherwise a perfectly acceptable style of writing. The following suggestions should help to reduce the need for authors to re-write their abstracts.

The abstract should not be a table of contents in prose, neither should it be an introduction. It should be informative. Tell the reader what the research was about, how it was undertaken and what was discovered, but not how the poster or paper is organized. The main findings must be summarized. If there are too many of them, then just exemplify them in the abstract. The essential elements of the abstract are:

- Background: A simple opening sentence or two placing the work in context
- Aims: One or two sentences giving the purpose of the work
- Method(s): One or two sentences explaining what was done
- Results: One or two sentences indicating the main findings
- Conclusions: One sentence giving the most important consequence of the work.

The following guidelines have been extracted from recent criticisms of real abstracts. This may help to overcome some of the most frequent problems:

- Do not commence with "this paper...", "this report..." or similar. It is better to write about the research than about the paper
- Similarly, do not explain the sections or parts of the paper
- Avoid sentences that end in "...is described", "...is reported", "...is analysed" or similar. These are simply too vague to be informative
- Do not begin sentences with "it is suggested that...", "it is believed that...", "it is felt that..." or similar. In every case, the four words can be omitted without damaging the essential message
- Do not write in the first person in *any* form. Thus, not only should you avoid "I", but also "we", "the author", "the writer" and so on. Again, this is because the abstract should be about the research, not about the act of writing.