

Innovative Research: Writing an Effective Abstract to Improve Your Article Quality and Readability

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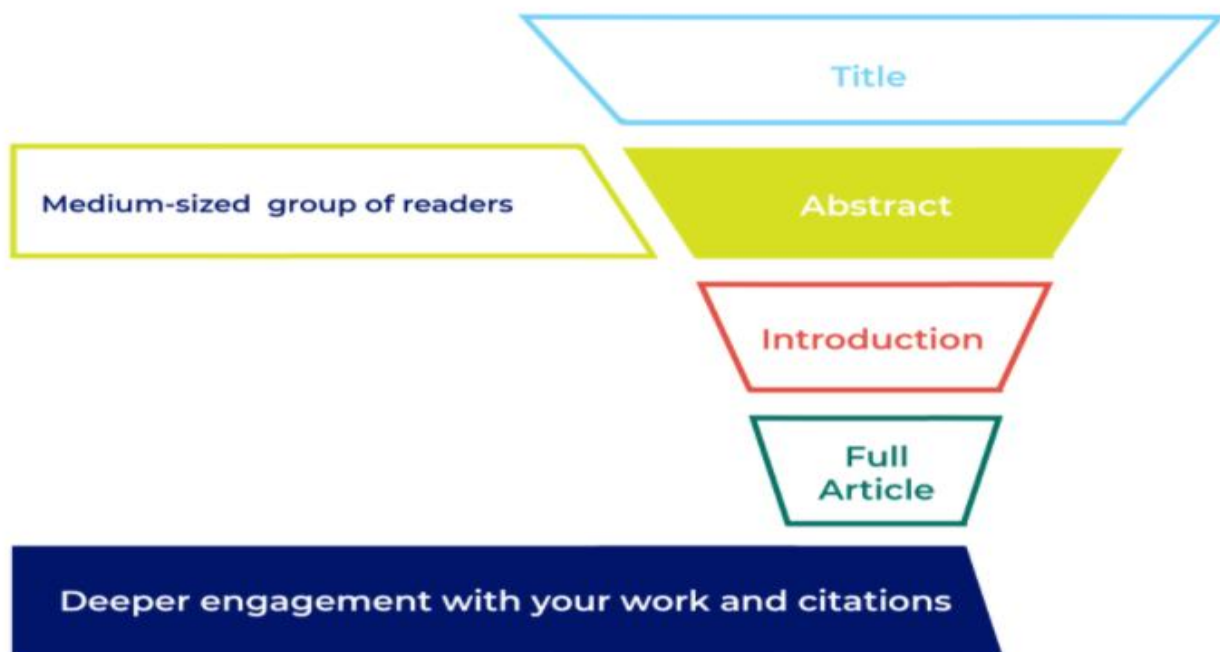
Abstract: There are plenty of good reasons why every researcher should invest time and energy in writing and abstract. It will form the basis for several key decisions: whether an editor sends out your submission for review; whether the reviewer accepts that review Invitation; and whether other researchers read your published paper. Unless your article is open access, the title and abstract are the only elements freely available to everyone. Increased readership means a higher possibility of having your work referenced in subsequent research publications! Consequently, it is critical that your abstract be accurate. Several frequently asked issues from early career researchers are addressed in this review article, including what is the optimal length for an abstract and how long an abstract should be. Which information should be provided and how much detail? Moreover, what kind of language is most effective? You will walk away with a better knowledge of the importance that the abstract can play in the success of your paper, as well as the steps you can take to guarantee that it is the best it possibly can.

Keywords: abstract, Journal article, effective writing, language

I. INTRODUCTION

The main challenge you'll face when writing your abstract is keeping it concise and fitting in all the information you need. Depending on your subject area the journal It may be

necessary to write an organized abstract that follows certain headings. Keep it concise and to the point. Most journals have a maximum word count, so check guidelines before you write the abstract to save time editing it later. Write for your audience. Are they specialists in your specific field? Are they cross-disciplinary? Are they non-specialists? For a broad readership or study that may be of public interest, make your terminology as simple as possible. If you're writing in English, do remember that not all of your readers will necessarily be native English speakers. Focus on key results, conclusions and take-home messages. Write your paper first, then create the abstract as a summary. You should ensure that your abstract conforms to journal standards before you write it, such as the necessary subheadings. Include keywords or phrases to help readers search for your work in indexing databases like PubMed or Google Scholar. Double and triple check your abstract for spelling and grammar errors. These kinds of errors can give potential reviewers the impression that your research isn't sound, and can make it easier to find reviewers who accept the invitation to review your manuscript. Your abstract should be a taste of what is to come in the rest of your article.



II. EFFECTIVE ABSTRACT FOR ARTICLE

A well-composed abstract is key to the effective dissemination of your research. Many articles are only ever read in abstract form. Anonymous peer-reviewers of your scholarship will read the abstract first. The African Studies Review (ASR) provides abstracts in English, French, and Portuguese, in order to reach the widest possible global audience. You need to provide one 100-word version in at least one language. The abstract is not the first paragraph of an article. An abstract is a complete version or form of your article. It is the entire article epitomized, covering the major points, content and scope of your argument, the theoretical framework or scholarly point of departure, as well as the methodology, and type of evidentiary basis. It should be able to stand alone. (Kothari et al., 2014).

According to (Obeng-ofori, 2020) the abstract can be described as the “elevator pitch” for a possible publication: imagine you’re stuck in the elevator at the ASA Annual Meeting with one of the editors of the ASR. You need to provide an overview that hits the high points in about one minute and convinces the editor that it’s worthy of further consideration. It should very concisely summarize the topic, how it fits into the broader literature, the contribution, the research strategy, the key findings, and the broader implications. All ASR articles are available via multiple digital platforms, so your abstract must be searchable online. If you plan to use two prevalent methods for optimizing your abstracts for search engines, we recommend you do so. By increasing the chances of others seeing and sharing it, this will significantly enhance the likelihood of it being widely circulated.

First, construct a descriptive title for your article. In search engine terms, the title of each article abstract is crucial. The search engine assumes that the title contains the words most relevant to the article. This is why it is important to choose a descriptive, unambiguous, and accurate title. While it may be tempting to use a quote from an informant or sources, think about how search terms draw in a potential reader who may be looking for your article or your subject area, community, or country of study, and help them by constructing a title to include those terms. Remember that people search for key phrases, not just single words.

Second, reiterate key title phrases in the abstract. You should reiterate the key phrases in the article title within the abstract itself. Although search engines use proprietary algorithms, the number of times that certain words and phrases appear on a webpage has a significant impact in how they are ranked in searches.

Things You Should Do:

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|---|--|
| 1. Draft the abstract AFTER you have finished the article | 2. Construct a simple, descriptive and accurate title, containing all the important key terms and phrases that relate to the topic, theme, or argument |
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| 3. Repeat key phrases and incorporate them smoothly - remember that the primary audience is a potential reader and not a search engine | 4. Use synonyms or related key phrases |
| 5. Provide a clear and concise summary of the content of the chapter | 6. Describe your methodology and/or data |
| 7. Write in the third-person present tense | 8. Review and revise the abstract before you submit your article for review |
| 9. Revise the abstract every time you revise your article | |

Things You Should Not Do:

| | |
|---|--|
| • Write the abstract BEFORE the article | • Construct an ambiguous and elaborate title |
| • Provide general facts - be sure to focus on the core discussions/findings | • Write in the first person |
| • Forget to proof-read for typos | • Review the entire literature |
| • Write in the past or future tense | • Employ undefined abbreviations or acronyms |
| • Include citations or references | • Use overly technical language |
| • Use speculative phraseology | |

Example of a strong Review Abstract:

“States at War: Confronting Conflict in Africa”

Catharine Newbury

In the early 1990s, democratization dominated discourse on African politics. However fraught with contradictions, processes of political liberalization held out hope for more responsive, accountable government and some African countries achieved impressive gains. But in many parts of the continent the outlook at the beginning of the twenty-first century is decidedly more somber. An increase in violence and war has had devastating consequences for people and their communities. Newbury examines several approaches to confronting these conflicts and highlights three lessons that emerge. In some situations, international involvement is essential to end a war, and doing this successfully requires enormous resources. But external assistance cannot follow a single template; it must be adapted to different local dynamics and coordinated with efforts of peace-builders within. Newbury argues that greater support is needed for efforts to alleviate the conditions that spawn wars and violence. (Obeng-ofori, 2020).

Example of a weak Review Abstract:

“Conflict and Chaos: Understanding War, Rethinking Violence”

Catharine Newbury

This article argues that in the early 1990s democratization dominated African political discourse. I explore the processes of political liberalization and how they were fraught with contradictions, although they held out hope for more

responsive, accountable government. I identify some African countries that achieved impressive gains. But it has been argued by other scholars (Schmidt 2007; Jones 2005; Asante 1996) that the outlook at the beginning of the twenty-first century will be decidedly more somber. An increase in violence and war has had overdetermining ramifications broadly. I will examine several approaches to confronting these conflicts and I will highlight three lessons that emerge. In some situations, international involvement may be essential to end a war, and doing this successfully may require enormous resources. But external assistance cannot follow a single template; it must be adapted to different local dynamics and coordinated with efforts of peace-builders within. The author cites various data to argue that greater support is needed for efforts to alleviate the conditions that spawn wars and violence. (Obeng-ofori, 2020).

III. IDEAL LENGTH FOR AN ABSTRACT

According to (Sroka & Lórincozy, 2015). The transitory summary of any paper is termed as an abstract. It can contain all the main arguments of the paper. The reason, authors of essay writing service or journal house consider it as the most vital part of any composition. In some publications, it is also termed as *synopsis* or a *précis*. A good abstract is that which gives all the information of paper. It gives the idea to the reader whether he should read the complete paper or not.

To write a good abstract, few things must be kept in mind. An important point to consider is the word count of an abstract. It should not exceed more than the required limit. The length of an abstract varies with the discipline, the word count and requirement of the publisher.

According to (Sanganyado, 2019). The abstract of an APA research paper has the following characteristics: concise summary of the key points of the research. It should contain the research topic, research questions, participants, methods, results and data analysis. The abstract could include possible implications of the research and future work connected to the findings. The abstract should be a single paragraph and double-spaced. An abstract should be between 150 and 250 words.

IV. HOW MUCH DETAIL SHOULD I INCLUDE IN MY ABSTRACT?

According to (FAGBOHUNGBE & JAYEOBA, n.d.) “*the rhetorical structure underlying the abstract encompasses at least five moves some of which are obligatory and some are optional. In the abstract, move one is optional and is used to establish a general background for the topic. Move two introduces the research problem. Move three discusses the methodology required for solving the problem. Move four reports the research findings. Finally, move five, which is also optional, reports the possible implications. Naturally, the conclusion section involves an entirely different rhetorical structure with its own unique moves. The conclusion should report the following: Restate the research topic and explain*

why it is important, briefly summarize main points, Interpret the results, make a logical generalization, point out implications, point out limitations, and Provide suggestions for further research “.

According to (FitzPatrick & McKeown, 2021). “*It is very important that you stick to the specific “Guide for Authors” of the journal you are submitting to. An abstract should briefly*

1. *Re-establish the topic of the research,*
2. *State the research problem/or main objectives of the research,*
3. *Indicate the methodology used,*
4. *Present one or two sentences on the main findings and applications,*
5. *Present the main conclusions.*

According to (Chumaidah, 2021) “*Abstracts are also called a small thesis or dissertation that aim at giving a summary of the whole work. It should include something about the problem, the aims, the hypotheses, the procedures, the limits, the value of the study and something about the findings and the conclusions.* “.

According to (Green et al., 2021). “*Some journals publish abstracts that are written as free-flowing paragraphs, most journals require abstracts to conform to a formal structure within a word count of, usually, 200–250 words. The usual sections defined in a structured abstract are the background, methods, results, and conclusions. It must also include what is not known about the subject and hence what the study intended to examine (or what the paper seeks to present).* “.

V. WHAT KIND OF LANGUAGE WORKS BEST FOR MY ABSTRACT?

According to (Klimovich, 2021). As a writer, it is important not only to think about what you say, but how you say it. To communicate effectively, it is not enough to have well organized ideas expressed in complete and coherent sentences and paragraphs. One must also think about the style, tone and clarity of his/her writing, and adapt these elements to the reading audience. Again, analyzing one's audience and purpose is the key to writing effectiveness. In order to choose the most effective language, the writer must consider the objective of the document, the context in which it is being written, and who will be reading it.

VI. CONCLUSION

Since an abstract is a window to a study, authors should ensure that the abstract is accurate, honest, readable, and ascertainable. Due to lack of training in scientific writing and sometimes unethical practices, abstracts are often poorly written, lack critical information, and sometimes contain spin. An effective abstract provides brief but adequate information on the purpose, procedure, results and implications of a study. This paper has shown that a good abstract should accelerate the interest of the reader without whirling for attention.

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