



# How to Write a Research Abstract

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# Agenda

- I. General Tips
- II. Student Paper Abstracts
- III. Conference/Proposal Abstracts (SRC)
- IV. Brief Review - Main Sections of Research Paper
- V. Abstract Examples

# General Tips to Consider

(APA, 2020; Section 2.9)

- ▶ *An abstract should summarize your major points in the same order they are presented in the paper (APA, 2020).*
- ▶ *An abstract is a brief, comprehensive summary of the contents of the paper.*
- ▶ *Consult the instructions for authors or the webpage of the journal and/or conference website to which you plan to submit your article/presentation.*
- ▶ *Abstracts typically are limited to no more than 250 words.*
- ▶ *Abstracts may appear in paragraph or structured format. Abstracts in paragraph format are written as a single paragraph without indentation of the first line.*

# Student Paper Abstracts

(APA, 2020; Section 2.9-10)

- ▶ *Place the abstract on its own page after the title page (i.e., page 2).*
- ▶ *Write the section label “Abstract” in bold title case, centered at the top of the page, and place the abstract below the label.*
- ▶ *Keywords are words, phrases, or acronyms that describe the most important aspects of your paper. They are used for indexing in databases and help readers find your work during a search.*
- ▶ *Keywords are not required for student papers unless requested by the instructor or institution.*
- ▶ *Write the label “Keywords:” (in italic) one line below the abstract, indented 0.5 in. like a regular paragraph, followed by the keywords in lowercase (but capitalize proper nouns; see Section 6.14), separated by commas. The keywords can be listed in any order. Do not use a period or other punctuation after the last keyword.*

# Conference/Proposal Abstracts

(i.e., SRC)

- ▶ Choose type of proposal:
- ▶ **10-MINUTE ORAL PRESENTATION (POWERPOINT)**- If you have completed your research project or have reached a significant milestone on the way toward publishable work, you can give a 10-minute oral presentation of your research.
- ▶ **POSTER PRESENTATION (36X48)**- If your project is still underway, or if it is a part of a larger project, you can present the status of your contribution to the work in a poster format.
- ▶ **SYMPOSIUM**- a group of students from the same class, lab, etc. can propose a symposium together! Symposia will include 4-6 oral presentations on the same project, topic, or theme.
- ▶ *Students present their research before a panel of faculty and leaders, with two top winners selected per session. Based on the judges' evaluations, up to 10 winning presentations will be selected for the CSU Statewide Student Research Competition.*

# Conference/Proposal Abstracts

(i.e., SRC)

- ▶ **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION\***- If you are just getting started in your project, or are new to research programs, you can discuss the work you are doing in a roundtable format, moderated by a faculty member.
- ▶ **DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECT SESSIONS\***- New for SRC 2023, Developmental Project Sessions will be designated for projects that were conducted for class assignments or similar learning experiences and were not intended to contribute to generalizable research. Students presenting developmental projects will have the choice of a 10-minute oral or poster presentation.

\* **Note:** Roundtable and developmental project presentations are not eligible to be selected for awards or CSU Statewide competition.

- ▶ Keywords may be requested; carefully read the instructions for each submission as instructions vary.

# Journal Publications/Manuscripts

- ▶ *Read journal-specific instructions (may vary).*
- ▶ *Labels are inserted to identify various sections (e.g., **Objective, Method, Results, Conclusions**)*
  - ▶ *Use the **labels** and formatting prescribed by the journal to which you are submitting your manuscript (e.g., APA journals use bold italic for the labels).*
- ▶ *For manuscripts being submitted to APA journals, provide three to five keywords describing the content.*



# Brief Review of Research Paper

*Keywords are helpful.\**



# Brief Review of Research Paper

(content only)

1. Introduction

2. Method

3. Results

4. Discussion

\*Think 1-2 sentences from each section,  
for the abstract.

# Introduction

- ▶ Three main components to consider:
  - ▶ The problem under study
    - ▶ Broad context and significance of the topic
  - ▶ The literature review
    - ▶ Past research and theory
    - ▶ State how previous research is related to your study (support it or not, and why?)
  - ▶ The rationale (importance) and hypothesis
    - ▶ What are the important variables being studied?
      - ▶ Hint: keywords, IVs, DV

# Method

## Participants

### Demographics

- ← Age
- ← Gender

### Groups

- ← Are your participants being divided into groups? (control vs experimental group)

### Materials/Apparatus

- ← Consider tests and scale that will be (or was used) for your research. If performing a unique task aside from any test or scale, **emphasize that!**

### Procedure (How the research was conducted)

- ← Consider significance

# Results

- ← Consider the outcome of your research and whether your data supports your hypothesis.
- ← Consider statistical significance and relevance to field of research.
- ← Include descriptive statistics, such as number of subjects ( $N$ ), the mean ( $M$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD$ ). This can support future visuals such as table charts or graphs in the presentation of your data.
- ← Percentages are displayed in parentheses with no decimal places.

# Discussion

## Consider Limitations

- Explains any setbacks you had during your study, including insignificance

## Example:

- Confounding variables or protective factors
- Weak validity of measure (some items did not ask what you were measuring)
- Factors that contributed to threats of internal validity

# Discussion



Consider  
statement for  
Future  
Research



Specific  
Recommendations  
(i.e., what could be  
done differently?)



How does your  
study help  
society?



New ideas for  
variable  
reliability

Conclude your abstract with important note/statement  
that leaves the reader interested!

# References

American Publication manual for the American Psychological Association (7th Ed.) Washington, DC: Author.