How to Compose an Abstract
for your research project

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
East Tennessee State University

Appalachian Student Research Forum

- Poster Competition
- Millennium Centre, April 4-5, 2018
- Abstract Submission Deadline: March 1, 2018
- http://www.etsu.edu/studentresearch/

Abstract Guidelines

- What is an abstract?
- What are the sections of an abstract?
  - Title
  - Authors Section
  - Body
- What are the parts of the body of an abstract?
  - Intro
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Conclusions

What is an abstract?

- A paper used in academic research to summarize a completed study or other project

If done well, it makes the reader want to learn more about your research.

- A paragraph written in your own words, describing your entire project
- Easily understood by a person outside the field
- An abstract does *not* contain references.

How will it be judged?

- Your abstract will be judged as part of your presentation.
- Judges will look for relevance of the study to the discipline.
- Judges will check if the abstract is:
  - well-written,
  - adequately descriptive of the research,
  - easy to understand, and
  - error-free.
- Does the abstract paragraph contain the proper sections (intro, methods, results and conclusions)?

Abstract Sections

- Title
- Authors
- Body

Title Section

- Should indicate the overall subject matter of your project

It doesn't have to be "catchy", just informative.

Authors Section

- A list of all authors who have worked on the project
- Names of students and faculty, in that order

  Only credentials for completed terminal degrees should be listed -- pending degrees should not be included.

- Their respective affiliations (department, college, university, city, and state)
- The first author listed MUST be the student presenter/speaker

Authors Section Example 1

- If there is a single student author and a single faculty sponsor/mentor in the same department, place the word "and" between their names, then list their departmental affiliation.

Jane Doe and Dr. John Doe, Department of Environmental Health, College of Public Health, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee

Authors Section Example 2

- If there is a single student author and a single faculty sponsor/mentor in different departments but the same college, place the word "and" between their names, then list their respective departmental affiliations.

John Doe and Dr. Jane Doe, Departments of Environmental Health and Health Sciences, College of Public Health, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee

Authors Section Example 3

- If there is a single student author and a single faculty sponsor/mentor in different departments and colleges, place the word "and" between their names, then list their respective departmental affiliations.

John Doe and Dr. Jane Doe, Department of Environmental Health, College of Public Health, and Department of Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee

Authors Section Example 4

- If there are multiple authors from different departments, areas, or organizations, list all authors first, then their affiliations in respective order, using superscript numbers to match affiliations.

Jane Doe[1], Smokey the Bear[2], Vay Dock[3], Dr. Bio Prof[1]. and Dr. R. U. Abugman[1].

[1] Department of Biological Sciences, College of Arts and Sciences, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN;

[2] Mount Mitchell State Park, Burnsville, NC;

[3] Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Mountain Home, TN.

Body of the Abstract

- A single paragraph written in your own words, describing your entire project.
- Length: no more than 3000 characters (including spaces), or about 500 words.
- Four (4) distinct parts:
  - Introduction
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Conclusions

Introduction

- Specifically identifies the project's objective(s)
- Briefly states the question and hypothesis.
- May contain:
  - Background info, but be careful – not too much!
  - Rationale

Your question and hypothesis statement should answer the questions:

Why do we care about the problem?

What practical, scientific, theoretical or artistic gap is this research filling?

Methods

- A thorough description of the **methods** and processes used
- Give details of what you actually did to get your results and how you did it

This is the meat of your abstract, probably the largest part.

Results

- A summary of the findings resulting from your methods
- Provide an answer to the question:

"As a result of completing the above procedure, what did you learn/invent/create?"

*You should **NOT** say "The results will be discussed".*

Conclusions

- Conclusions drawn should explain the larger implications of your findings

  …especially for the problem/gap identified in the introduction

Judges will look to see if your conclusions tie back to the question.

What if the project isn't completed yet?

- The Results Section would describe the expected outcomes

  i.e., what you expect to see/find/have happen

- The Conlucions Section would include an explanation of what it would mean if your expected outcomes were not achieved

Tips

- Do not use jargon or abbreviations that those outside your field would not understand.
- Use concise wording and do not digress from question/methods/results.
- Emphasize facts and what actually took place during the research; do not use speculative statements which are not founded in data.
- Limit background information and focus on the work actually performed.
- Use clear language such as “This study examined *such and such* by doing *such and such*".

Tips

- *Proofread! Proofread! Proofead!*

  Errors make you and us look bad, because abstracts are printed or .pdf'd, so mistakes glare forever.

- Do not submit your abstract late!
  Late submissions will not be accepted.

What’s wrong with this abstract?

Diazonium-4-(trifluorovinyloxy) -perfluorobutanesulfonyl fluoride zwitterionic monomer (I) is proposed to be polymerized and further act as a new electrolyte for Polymer exchange membrane fuel cell(PEMFCs). One reason is that, aromatic trifluorovinyl aryl ether (TFVE) can easily be polymerized. Furthermore, the diazonium moiety in the monomer is expected to covalently attached the electrolyte to the carbon electrodes support to maximize the efficiency of utilization of the catalyst. A seven steps synthetic scheme is designed to obtain this monomer (I) from polytetrafluoroethylene. The third step in the seven steps synthetic scheme which is 4-(2-Bromotetrafluoroethoxy)-3-nitro-benzensulfonyl amide has now been successfully synthesized. All the intermediates and final product were characterized by 1H and 19F NMR and FTIR spectroscopy.

What's wrong with this abstract?

Using a Midwestern sample of sex offenders, the current study reports findings on the utility of the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) in predicting recidivism for offenders with a history of sexual crimes. While the LSI-R has been previously validated using samples of sex offenders, there remains criticism of its utility with this population as it does not speak directly to sexual offending, victimization or sexual recidivism. The LSI-R is an internationally recognized risk assessment measure and assesses offenders using a 54 item scale. The current study includes data from a sample of 150 sexual offenders over a 36-month period. This study aims to investigate how three variables: level of education, age and employment status; correlate to recidivism, and if they moderate the effectiveness of the tool in predicting future offending. This study tests the following hypotheses: 1) low level of education and unemployment will moderate the LSI-R's predictive utility with sexual offenders; 2) younger sexual offenders are more likely to commit a new crime than older sexual offenders; and 3) the LSI-R will be a valid predictor of recidivism for sexual offenders.

Questions?

e-mail research@etsu.edu