**JAG04 WRITING AN ABSTRACT**

An abstract summarizes, usually in one paragraph of 300 words or less, the major aspects of the entire paper in a prescribed sequence that includes:

1) the overall purpose of the study and the research problem(s) you investigated;

2) the basic design of the study;

3) major findings or trends found as a result of your analysis; and,

4) a brief summary of your interpretations and conclusions.

**Importance of a good abstract**

Sometimes your professor will ask you to include an abstract, or general summary of your work, with your research paper. The abstract allows you to elaborate upon each major aspect of the paper and **helps readers decide whether they want to read the rest of the paper.** Therefore, enough key information [e.g., summary results, observations, trends, etc.] must be included to make the abstract useful to someone who may want to examine your work.

**How do you know when you have enough information in your abstract?** A simple rule-of-thumb is to imagine that you are another researcher doing a similar study. Then ask yourself: if your abstract was the only part of the paper you could access, would you be happy with the amount of information presented there? Does it tell the whole story about your study? If the answer is "no" then the abstract likely needs to be revised.

**Writing style**

**Use the active voice when possible** but note that much of your abstract may require passive sentence constructions. Regardless, write your abstract using concise, but complete, sentences. Get to the point quickly and **always use the past tense** because you are reporting on a study that has been completed.

**How would you improve the style of this sentence?**

*In the future, researchers will need to conduct additional studies in order to determine the causes of high BMI among youth experiencing homelessness.*

**To find out, watch the video linked below:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H50ktdKlcnU&list=PLTlC-wA0gcDirN4kHwlJDRCTNuYMuzvrT&index=2>

**Formatting**

Abstracts should be formatted as a single paragraph in a block format and with no paragraph indentations. In most cases, the abstract page immediately follows the title page. Do not number the page. Rules set forth in writing manual vary but, in general, you should center the word "Abstract" at the top of the page with double spacing between the heading and the abstract. The final sentences of an abstract concisely summarize your study’s conclusions, implications, or applications to practice and, if appropriate, can be followed by a statement about the need for additional research revealed from the findings.

**Composing Your Abstract**

Although it is the first section of your paper, the abstract should be written last since it will summarize the contents of your entire paper. A good strategy to begin composing your abstract is to take whole sentences or key phrases from each section of the paper and put them in a sequence that summarizes the contents. Then revise or add connecting phrases or words to make the narrative flow clearly and smoothly. Note that statistical findings should be reported parenthetically [i.e., written in parentheses].

Before handing in your final paper, check to make sure that the information in the abstract completely agrees with what you have written in the paper. Think of the abstract as a sequential set of complete sentences describing the most crucial information using the fewest necessary words.  
  
**The abstract SHOULD NOT contain:**

* Lengthy background or contextual information,
* Redundant phrases, unnecessary adverbs and adjectives, and repetitive information;
* Acronyms or abbreviations,
* References to other literature [say something like, "current research shows that..." or "studies have indicated..."],
* Using ellipticals [i.e., ending with "..."] or incomplete sentences,
* Jargon or terms that may be confusing to the reader,
* Citations to other works, and
* Any sort of image, illustration, figure, or table, or references to them.

(adapted from <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/abstract>)

**Task 1 EXAM PRACTICE: Complete each gap in the abstract with one of the expressions below. You will not need three words.**

***analyse assessment awareness compared lifelong motivation perceptions prior related suggest tends***

There is a growing (1) …………. that science education should center not just on knowledge acquisition but developing the foundation for (2) ………….. learning. However, for intentional learning of science to occur in school, out of school, and after school, there needs to be a motivation to learn science. (3) …………. research had shown that students’ motivation to learn science (4) …………….. to decrease during adolescence. This study (5) ………….. 5th through 8th grade students’ self-reported goal orientations, engagement in science class, continuing motivation for science learning, and (6) …………… of their schools’ and parents’ goals emphases, in Israeli traditional and democratic schools. The results show that the decline in adolescents’ motivation for science learning in school and out of school is not an inevitable developmental trend, since it is apparent only in traditional schools but not in democratic ones. The results (7) ……………. that the non-declining motivation of adolescents in democratic schools is not a result of home influence but rather is (8) …………… to the school culture.

(Dana Vedder-Weiss and David Fortus. 2014. [Adolescents’ declining motivation to learn science: Inevitable or not?](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tea.20398/pdf) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/10982736/homepage/all_virtual_issues.htm#June2014>)

(**KEY**: 1. awareness; 2. lifelong; 3. prior; 4. tends; 5. compared; 6. assessment; 7. suggest; 8.related)

**Task 2 Use a university database or a simple search engine to find abstracts relevant to your studies. Highlight useful expressions that you might also use in your writing- see an example below:**

[**The cultural production of science in reform-based physics: Girls' access, participation, and resistance**](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tea.20006/pdf)

Heidi B. Carlone

Recent literature in science education suggests that, to transform girls’ participation, learning, and identities within school science, we must think about ways to engage girls in different kinds of educational activities that promote broader meanings of science and scientist. This study was designed to examine more deeply this call for a changed science curriculum and its implications for girls’ participation, interest, and emerging science identities. In this ethnographic study, I examine the culturally produced meanings of science and scientist in a reform-based physics classroom that used a curriculum called Active Physics, how these meanings reproduced and contested larger sociohistorical (and prototypical) meanings of science and scientist, and the ways girls participated within and against these meanings. The girls in this upper middle class school were mostly concerned with accessing and maintaining a good student identity (rather than connecting to science in any meaningful way) and resisted promoted meanings of science and scientist that they perceived as threatening to their good student identities. Their embrace of the ways school defined success (via grades and college admission) produced a meaning of Active Physics as a way to get credentials on a transcript and ensured their disconnection from real-world, meaningful science and science identities. The story of girls’ participation and resistance in Active Physics complicates our quest for gender-fair science and highlights the power of sociohistorical meanings of schooling and science in producing educational subjects.

(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/10982736/homepage/all_virtual_issues.htm#June2014>)