**WRITING AN ABSTRACT**

**Task 1 Discuss:**

* What is an abstract? What is its purpose?
* How long should it be?
* When should I write it?
* How do I know I have included enough information in my abstract?
* What are the things that should not be included in an abstract?
* Is there a difference between a paper and presentation abstract?
* Can I use “I” in my abstract?

**Watch Joe´s video on abstracts and see if he provides answers to the questions above:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eizFgm8dRLE>

**Task 2 Analyse the abstract below.**

* **What was the study about?**
* **Identify the individual sections**
* **Highlight useful academic phrases**

There is a growing awareness that science education should center not just on knowledge acquisition but developing the foundation for lifelong 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. Recent research has shown that students’ motivation to learn science tends to decrease during adolescence. This study compared 5th through 8th grade students’ self-reported goal orientations, engagement in science class, continuing motivation for science learning, and assessment of their schools’ and parents’ goals 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 suggest that the non-declining motivation of adolescents in democratic schools is not a result of home influence but rather is related to the school culture.

(Dana Vedder-Weiss and David Fortus. 2014. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/10982736/homepage/all_virtual_issues.htm#June2014>)

* **Rewrite the abstract for the purposes of a presentation**

**THE ESSENTIAL 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 context of the study;

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

3) the basic design of the study (methods);

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

5) 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.

**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].

**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>)

**USEFUL PHRASES**

**Introductory sentences**

The paper / article / presentation *discusses / analyses / describes / introduces / investigates / demonstrates / aims to…*

*The main objective / goal / purpose is…*

Common mistakes:

Wrong: ~~In this paper there is presented a novel method of…~~

Right: This paper presents a novel method of… OR In this paper a novel method of… is presented

**Background of the problem**

*In the last few years there has been a growing interest in …..*

*Quite recently, considerable attention has been paid to …..*

*….. have/has been gaining importance in recent years …..*

*….. have/has been utilized in many applications such as …..*

**Results**

*It has been found that …..*

*The results show that …..*

*The results are compatible with …..*

*As mentioned earlier/above, …..*

*This method is based on …..*

**Conclusion(s)**

*In our future research we intend to concentrate on …..*

*Future work will involve …..*

*On the basis of the promising findings presented in this paper, work on the remaining issues*

*is continuing and will be presented in future papers.*

*The next stage of our research will be (experimental confirmation of our theory).*

*Further study of the issue would be of interest.*

*Clearly, further research will be needed/required to prove/validate …..*

*Several other questions remain to be addressed/resolved.*

*More research into ….. is still necessary before obtaining a definitive answer to …..*

*Further study of the issue is still required.*

*Further research on/into ….. is desirable/necessary (to extend our knowledge of) …..*

*Continuing/continued research on/into ….. appears fully justified because …..*

*More tests/experiments/calculations will be needed to verify whether …..*