

Abstract

The abstract provides the reader with an overview of your paper. In this section, you should inform the reader of the question/problem you investigated and the main point(s) of your findings and conclusions. The aim of your abstract is to give the reader the most salient aspects of your experiment and findings. The abstract will be where the reader goes to find out what your study was about, and in some cases this may be the only part of your paper they read! For this reason the abstract of your paper should be able to stand alone, meaning that someone should be able to understand your experiment from the abstract without reading the entire paper. Your lab instructor will, of course, read your entire paper. However, the amount of published information available in any field or subfield of science is growing at such a rate that no researcher can read every single journal article. Reading an abstract is a good way to get an overview of someone's project in just a few minutes. The abstract is the first section of your report, but it is generally best written last, as it summarizes what is in the other sections of your report.

In short form, the following information belongs in your Abstract:

- A brief statement of the question/problem you're investigating.
- A brief description of the experiment or study you conducted (i.e., how you went about trying to answer your question or address the problem).
- A brief description of your findings and the possible implications of those findings.