

ABSTRACT WRITING

To inform others of their research, scientists and engineers write journal articles and give "papers" at meetings. Abstracts are prepared to serve either or both of the following purposes:

- a. To enable a reader to decide whether this topic is of sufficient interest to warrant taking the time to read the entire article or to go hear the paper;
- b. To acquaint the reader with recent research results without his or her needing to read the entire article or to hear the paper.

There is no "standard" or required arrangement for the parts of an abstract. Its thought-sequence frequently is totally different from that of the paper or oral presentation. A good abstract usually must be drafted and redrafted — eliminating, adding, changing and rearranging the words. There is nothing wrong in trying out drafts on other people, or in discussing abstract writing with an English teacher.

1. Do not exceed 150 words; prepare a double-spaced typewritten copy.
2. In describing completed research use past tense and third person; use present tense when stating existing facts and what is in the article or paper.
3. Check your spelling and sentence structure.
4. Assume that the reader has a good general technical vocabulary but minimize use of highly specialized words or abbreviations.
5. If reference to the procedure employed is essential, try to restrict it to identification of the method or type of process employed.
6. State results, conclusions, or findings in a clear, concise fashion.
7. If your statement of findings reveals what your objectives were, there is no need to make a specific statement of objectives or motivation; the wordage saved can be used to say something else.
8. Financial sponsorship is concisely credited at the end of the abstract: "Research supported by..."

Example of a 100 Word Abstract (Please submit in double space format)

NAME: Glick, Gary
HOME ADDRESS: 20 Surrey Road, Somerset, New Jersey 08873
SCHOOL: Franklin Township High School
SPONSOR/TEACHER: Dr. Roberta Keenan
TITLE: Characterization of Medieval Glass by Neutron Activation Analysis

The concentrations of 15 component oxides in medieval stained glass were determined by instrumental thermal neutron activation analyses. Three groups of glass were studied: 52 specimens from a set of 13th century French grisaille panels from a demolished royal chateau at Rouen; 10 samples from a grisaille panel in the collection of the Princeton University Museum of Art; and a set of 32 random fragments of varied provenance. Significantly differing compositions were found. However, specimens from within individual and related groups of panels are compositionally similar even for different colors of glass, indicating a common origin for the related pieces.