



**Research Center for Social Sciences  
University of Kelaniya - Sri Lanka**

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## **Guidelines for Writing an Abstract**

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## 1. Format for the abstract Topic

- The research title should be simple, clear, specific, interesting, unique, precise and should not be misleading.
- In addition to the main title, a specification or limitation can be included in parentheses.
  - E.g. How to create a Research Topic (For BA level)
- It is crucial to include the most significant words and terms, also known as "keywords," in the title of a research. This helps with proper indexing and retrieval from search engines and scientific databases.

### Word Count of the Topic

- Min 7, Max 20
- If your topic is too broad, it may be difficult to find focused and relevant information; If your topic is too narrow, it may be difficult to find any information.

### Font size & Format

- 14 pt., Bold, Centered, Times New Roman

## 2. Abstract: Introduction

The abstract is an original document. An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger research work. An abstract is not a review or evaluate research but reporting the spirit of the research. Though the abstract is a short piece of work, it should contain introduction, research methods, finding, future directions of the respective field and key words.

There are two main importance of an abstract, one is other readers and researchers can understand quickly about a large work. This may help readers who may be interested in a longer work to quickly decide whether it is worth their time to read it. Second importance is that abstract can be used for indexing. Many online databases use abstracts to index larger works. Therefore, abstracts should contain keywords and phrases that allow for easy searching.

### **3. Purpose of writing abstracts**

Publishing /dissemination new knowledge, submitting articles to journals, especially online journals, applying for research grants, writing a book proposal and /or summarizing the overall postgraduate and undergraduate dissertation or thesis are the main purposes of writing abstracts.

### **4. Types of abstracts**

There are two types of abstracts.

- Descriptive abstracts
- Informative abstracts

#### **Descriptive abstracts**

- Indicates the type of information found in the work.
- It makes no judgments about the work, nor does it provide results or conclusions of the research.
- It does incorporate keywords found in the text and may include the purpose, methods, and scope of the research.
- Essentially, the descriptive abstract describes the work being abstracted.
- Some people consider it as an outline of the work, rather than a summary.
- Descriptive abstracts are usually very short (100- 400 words).

#### **Informative abstracts**

- The majority of abstracts are informative.
- Do not critique or evaluate a work,
- Do more than describe it.
- Acts as a surrogate for the work itself.
- The writer presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the complete article/paper/book.

- Includes the information that can be found in a descriptive abstract (purpose, methods, scope) but also includes the results and conclusions of the research and the recommendations of the author.
- The length varies according to discipline, but an informative abstract is rarely more than 10% of the length of the entire work. In the case of a longer work, it may be much less.

## 5. Components of an abstract

- **Reason for writing:**

What is the importance of the research? Why would a reader be interested in the larger work?

- **Problem:**

What problem does this work attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim?

- **Methodology:**

An abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study. Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research.

- **Results:**

Again, an abstract of a scientific work may include specific data that indicates the results of the project. Other abstracts may discuss the findings in a more general way.

- **Implications:**

What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work? How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

All abstracts include:

- A full citation of the source, preceding the abstract (Topic/Heading).
- The most important information first.
- The same type and style of language found in the original, including technical language.
- Key words and phrases that quickly identify the content and focus of the work.
- Clear, concise, and powerful language.
- The thesis of the work, usually in the first sentence.
- Background information that places the work in the larger body of literature.

- The same chronological structure as the original work.

<b>General Structure of the Abstract</b>			
	<b>Component</b>	<b>No of Sentences</b>	<b>Words</b>
1	Introduction	4 -5	50 - 80
2	Objective/s	3- 4	25 -45
3	Methodology	4- 6	40 -75
4	Result	5- 9	50 -80
5	Conclusion	4- 6	25 - 50
	<b>Total (Sen./Words)</b>	20 - 30	<b>250 - 300</b>

#### **6. Element not to be included in the abstract**

Following are the elements do not include into abstract.

- Do not refer extensively to other works.
- Do not add information not contained in the original work.
- Do not define terms.

#### **7. Other matter to be considered when you write abstract**

- Writing style – academic
- Sentence – Active Voice
- Arouse the reader’s interest
- Maintain the flow
- Use simple terms
- Use only your result/ conclusion
- Do not include large amount of data/ information
- Do not use citation or references

- Do not try to prove, analyze or criticize

## 8. General Guidelines

- **Format** - MS Word and Pdf.
- **Font** -
  - ✓ Title: 14 pt., Bold, Centered, Times New Roman
  - ✓ Body: 12 pt., Justify, Times New Roman
  - ✓ Keywords: 10pt., Italic, Times New Roman
- **Line spacing** - 1.0
- **Word Count** - 250-300 words
- **Keywords** - Maximum of 5 keywords
- **Language** - English and Sinhala