

Abstracts for Capstone Paper

Sources

- Purdue OWL: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/656/1/>

Note: Informational (not descriptive) abstracts are used in our discipline

Purpose of an abstract

- Provide the reader with a general overview of your work
- Highlight main outcomes of your work
- Indexing – an abstract provides a synopsis of your work which may be used in place of the complete document to minimize electronic storage requirements
- Convince
 - the reader to continue reading

OR

 - the reader to stop if your work is not relevant to their needs

Writing an Effective Abstract

- An abstract must “tell your story” in a paragraph
- An abstract should contain i) introduction, ii) body, and iii) conclusion
- Concise and cohesive writing style – must be understandable independent of the report
- Abstract audience is one or two levels lower than the paper audience
- Is a summary of work in report and does *not* contain any information that is not in the report, i.e. if someone has already read the paper, they will not learn anything from reading the abstract.
- Do *not* copy sentences from your report -- sentences in your report should be written with greater specificity than what is appropriate for an abstract
- Readable to a wide audience
- Proofread, proofread, proofread
- Abstracts for talks can change each time you give the talk and, thus, can be tailored to the audience. Abstracts for papers will be tied to that paper forever and shouldn't mislead the reader about what they will find in the paper.

Before writing an abstract

- Complete the writing of your report
- Identify the main outcomes of your written work from a big picture perspective

Abstract for a Talk

- Short literature review
- Outcomes
- Selling points
- Picture if you can