**Abstracts:**

* are short, usually less than 150 or 200 words, or 4-10 sentences.
* contain only the most important information.
* contain stand-alone qualities: they are like a miniature version of your work and can be understood without reading the paper.
* are mostly written in an impersonal style.
* do *not* contain figures, tables or quotations or references.
* do *not* contain abbreviations and acronyms.
* *never* refer to chapters, figures or tables contained within the report.

**Overall Abstract structure:**

Since abstracts are mostly parts of scientific papers or reports they follow this model:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Background** | 1-2 introductory sentences place the work in context. |
| **Problem/ Purpose** | Brief description of the problem of the investigation and on the objectives of the work. |
| **Method/materials** | Outline of the methodology and tools used, how the study was undertaken. |
| **Results/ implications** | 1-2 sentences stating the most important results and conclusions and/or recommendations and/or applications. |

**Language focus**

Abstracts use *impersonal* language using either phrases such as ‘*this paper investigates* (*not*: we investigated), or *passive voice.*

Start the abstract with ***present tense*** (this paper *investigates, aims at…)*

For the **methodology** you can use ***present tense***but it is more common to use***past tense (***a comparison *is, was made…*The data obtained are, *were evaluated using…)*

**Results**are expressed either in ***present*** or***past tense*** (a significant difference between XY *shows*, This *correlated*with…); often a combination of present and past tense is adequate when pointing to conclusions (the results *showed* that there*is*…)

**Applications** are often stated in ***present tense***(this result*can be applied to-…)*

**Vocabulary for abstracts**(adapted from Glasman-Deal, 2010)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Background | *a number of studies/ it is assumed/ it is widely known/ recent research* |
| Aim | *the aim of this study/ with the aim of/ to investigate, compare, examine* |
| Problem | *a need for/ drawback, disadvantage/ inaccurate, impractical, limited, time-consuming* |
| What the paper does | *(in) this study/paper/investigation/ adress(es), analyse(s), argue(s), compare(s), consider(s), dicuss(es), examine(s), extend(s), introduce(s), present(s), proposes(s), show(s)* |
| Method/materials | *was/were assembled, calculated, constructed, evaluated, formulated, measured, modelled, performed, studied, treated, used* |
| Results | *caused/decreased/had no effect/ it was noted, observed that…/ was/were achieved, found, identical, observed, present, unaffected* |
| Implications | *the evidence/ these results indicate(s), mean(s), suggest(s)* |
| Applications | *applicability/ can be applied, used/ make it possible to/ potential use/ relevant for,in* |

**Executive summary**

The executive summary is a brief version of the report; it restates each section of the report in abbreviated form with emphasis on findings, conclusions, and recommendations. Executive summaries *are standalone* documents.

Your executive summary should be comprehensive enough to cover all the pertinent information the reader will need to make a decision about you while staying within 1–2 pages (preferably just a single page).

Executive summary includes an outline of the situation, how the problem is being solved, planned activities, findings and recommendations. The remainder of the report contains the detailed analysis enabling the reader to gain more insight into any of the summary points, including flowcharts, tables, charts and other graphical means.

A **typical** executive summary will:

* be possibly 5-10% or so of the length of the main report (this can be 10 pages for a report of 200 pages)
* be written in language appropriate for the target audience
* consist of short and concise paragraphs
* often have similar headings as the full report
* be written in the same order as the main report
* only include material present in the main report
* make recommendations
* have a conclusion
* be able to be read separately from the main report
* exclude references
* mostly exclude tables/ figures (maybe 1 or 2 are ok)

**Overall structure of executive summary**

 It *could*be similar to an abstract but mostly contains more information:

* situation, context, background (what is the document about? Why is it important?)
* procedures/ methods/ materials
* findings/ solutions to a problem/ implications/ applications/ recommendations

**Process for writing an executive summary**

* think about your **audience** (knowledge, interest)
* identify key sentences in the report
* extract them
* edit them for readability

**Abstract vs Executive Summary**

Abstract and Executive Summary are two terms that are to be understood with difference. Abstract is a term used in the writing of research papers. On the other hand executive summary is a term used in business for a short document that summarizes a longer report.

An abstract is written with the purpose of letting the readers understand the gist of the research paper to be presented during a seminar or a conference. An abstract is written for orientation whereas an executive summary is written as a form of condensed version.

An executive summary should attempt at making a recommendation at the end. On the other hand an abstract makes no such recommendation towards the end. An executive summary should summarize more than one document. On the other hand an abstract summarizes just one research paper to be presented in the seminar.