

Language Practice Project 'English for Special Purposes Seminar' (ESPS)

P2	Writing an Abstract	Team Worksheet
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Project Task

Write an informative abstract of 200-300 words to be included in your seminar handout. Your abstract should inform the audience about the purpose of your seminar, the research methods you have used, and the main findings and conclusions of your research. Naturally, your abstract should be written in the last phase of your seminar preparation as it summarises your work. As for many documents in professional and academic communication, you need to produce your abstract according to structural and formal standards.

Structure your abstract as follows:

1. Purpose - Explain reasons for the choice of topic and the project focus briefly.
2. Methods – Reflect on the text selection (how? where? why?) and the content links between texts.
3. Findings – Concisely but adequately summarize your main findings. What did you discover in your research?
4. Conclusions - Outline the most significant results of your research project.

There are a number of formal criteria/features to be considered so that your abstract is effective:

- choose a title, using 15 words or less, that clearly indicates the topic of research
- use one well developed paragraph.
- follow the chronology of the project strictly .
- write a coherent text, provide logical connections (or transitions) between the information included.
- emphasise facts not persons (use passive voice where appropriate, avoid 'I/We').
- use appropriate language to be understandable to a wide audience
- avoid spelling, grammar and punctuation mistakes
- format the text (Font: Arial; Size: 11p, Line spacing:1.5, justified paragraph)

If your abstract is written in accordance with the instructions above, it

- helps students to digest information and prepare for the oral ESP seminar
- helps fellow students to decide if they should continue reading on this topic.
- allows instructors to review students' work without becoming bogged down in details.

Compiled and adapted from:

Kilborn, Judith. "Writing abstracts." Literary Education Online. 20 October 1998. St. Cloud State University. 30 August 2004. <<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/bizwrite/abstracts.html>>.

Writing Center at Colorado State University. "Writing abstracts." Writing@CSU. © 1997 – 2004 Colorado State University. 30 August 2004 <<http://writing.colostate.edu/references/documents/abstract/index.cfm>>.

"Guidelines for Abstracts." Retrieved April 8, 2009 <http://www.csus.edu/org/swaa/swaa_conference/call_for_papers/abstract_guide.html>

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Exercise:

Your abstract should include four points. Which of these four points do the following groups of phrases / beginnings of sentences refer to?

1. Purpose

2. Methods

3. Findings

4. Conclusions

The phrases below refer to point no. _____

- The research was based on ...
- This project draws on data from ...
- This paper examines ...
- The texts were found and selected as a result of ...
- The selected texts were included in the portfolio because ...
- ... can be recommended as a particularly rich source of information on this topic.
- The linking element between all of the selected texts is ...
- ... can be described as the thread of the project.

The phrases below refer to point no. _____

- The author's objective for this project is ...
- With this project the author aims to...
- The purpose of this project is...
- The topic was chosen because...
- The choice of topic and focus is a result of...
- This project does not cover.../is limited to.../excludes...
- This project explores ... to demonstrate...

The phrases below refer to point no. _____

- To run over the key points again...
- The main issues can be summarized as follows ...
- To sum up...
- There are some very good reasons ...
- It can be concluded that ...

The phrases below refer to point no. _____

- After reading the texts it can be stated that ...
- The different texts point out that .../ underline ...
- All in all, the authors managed to ... / acquired new insights into... / gained an overview of
- Initial findings demonstrate that
- This project identifies important questions which can be used to ...
- The authors' main problems were / consisted of ...
- While the author of text A believes that... the author of text B suggests that...
- Texts A and B both look at ... whereas text C reports on a slightly different aspect of ...