**Working with abstracts**

WHAT THEY ARE

An abstract is a form of summary used to summarize the contents of an academic text,such as an academic paper, a journal article or an oral presentation. When you first look at an academic article, the title and abstract give you an overall impression of what the article is about.

The abstract normally describes the aims of the research, the methods used to investigate the aims, and the main findings and conclusions. The abstract should stand alone,independent of the rest of the paper. By reading an abstract, the reader can understand the broad content, results and conclusions without needing to read the whole paper.

HOW THEY ARE USED

Abstracts allow researchers to find and When carrying out research, you might assess a wide range of relevant work, thus find many sources that appear relevant;remaining in touch with the large quantity you therefore need to decide which of literature in their field. In effect, they sources to concentrate on. By referring assist the wider academic community to the abstract first,you will be able to work together on common problems or make more informed decisions.areas of interest. When searching for information, researchers use key words to find relevant information. An abstract should therefore containkey words relating to the article or paper, for ease of retrieval.

As a student, it is very useful to look at abstracts in order to find out quickly about the main ideas of a text, and thus to decide whether the text is relevant to your needs. You may be expected to include abstracts at the beginning of pieces of extended writing,as well as to submit an abstract if you are going to give an oral presentation based on your project.

As with other aspects of academic writing, such as introductions and conclusions,abstracts have certain typical features. We will look at these in detail in the tasks that follow. In Unit 8, you will work on developing an abstract for your own project.

**Task one Read abstracts A and B below. What features can you identify?**

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| Abstract |  |  |
| 1. a general statement/essential background information |  |  |
| 2. the aims of the project, dissertation or thesis |  |  |
| 3. the implementation of an investigation in a real-world situation |  |  |
| 4. how the text is organized |  |  |
| 5. details of research carried out by the writer |  |  |
| 6. what the results of the research suggest |  |  |
| 7. a thesis statement |  |  |
| 8. a definition |  |  |

Abstract A

In the last 20 years, several researchers have described the changes that computers may bring to the field of language testing. Since the review carried out by the University of Fredericktown (Huntley-Gordon, 2008),writers in the Candleford Language Testing and Assessment Series have made various predictions as to how computer technology could change the testing of foreign language skills. The enthusiasm for much greater use of computers in language testing is based on the idea that computer-based tests will be better than traditional pencil-and-paper tests.（1） This paper sets out to examine the accuracy of this belief and will suggest some important advantages of computer-based testing, together with some words of caution.（2）

Abstract B

Assessment of observed teaching practice sessions on teacher training courses is viewed in general by the teaching profession as a flawed but necessary method of evaluation. The nature of observations means that criteria must be flexible to account for diverse teaching styles,while at the same time providing the observer with the guidance to make an informed decision on the trainee's performance. Inevitably, observers have their own set of personal theories that affect their assessment, resulting in inconsistency of grades awarded by different observers. The results suggest that standardization can help effect greater observer agreement, but the limitations of the study mean that the results need ratification through further research. It was found that discussion of grades raised issues such as the need for clearer criteria for grades, the need to limit the list of attributes graded and the importance of high-inference factors in teaching.

**Abstract C**

Overfishing has been among the key threats to the sustainability of aquatic ecosystems for decades. Developing African countries with great lakes,such as Zambia and Tanzania, need to address, in their policies, ways to solve this problem. However, the causes and effects of overfishing need to be identified before this policy is determined. "Overfishing" means that exploitation outweighs what is restored in the lakes as fish stock biomass (Travers et al., 2010). The overfishing problem and its underlying causes are examined, followed by an explanation of the current policy in the East African region and the weaknesses of this policy. Solutions to the overfishing problems are discussed, with an emphasis on sustainable fishing.

**Abstract D**

The challenges faced by modern rapidly urbanizing societies are felt not least by developing countries. Most of the urban population growth and future megacities are located in these countries. Sustainable development will require the provision of healthy and sustainable living environments with all the necessary basic services. It is argued here that a sound and multifunctional urban green structure is one of the basic services which should be provided. As green spaces can contribute to local livelihoods and economics, and provide essential environmental and social services,these should not be considered merely a luxury. The concept of urban and peri-urban forestry (UPF) is one of the innovative approaches developed for the planning and management of urban green structures.UPF,focusing on the tree-dominated part of urban green, is a strategic,integrative, interdisciplinary and participatory approach, aimed at sustainably developing the multiple benefits of forests and trees in urban environments. This paper introduces this strategy, which aims at awareness raising, state-of-the-art development, new technology and knowledge generation, as well as institutional and policy strengthening, information and knowledge dissemination, and enhancing sustainable UPF as a powerful tool. Examples of existing UPF experience and good practices from around the world are given, as much can be learnt from these.

**Abstract E**

In an energy-scarce future, ecosystem services will become more important in supporting the human economy. The primary role of the field of ecology will be the sustainable management of ecosystems. Energy scarcity will affect ecology in a number of ways. Sustaining the ecology will become more expensive, which will be justified because it hels in solving societal problems, especially in maintaining ecosystem services.Applied research on highly productive ecosystems is linked to the

preservation of productive ecosystems and the provision of high ecosystem services. The restoration and management of rich natural ecosystems will be as important as the protection of existing wild areas.Meanwhile,the energy-intensive micromanagement of ecosystems will become less feasible. Eco-technology and, more specifically, ecological engineering and self-design, are appropriate bases for developing sustainable ecosystem management. On this occasion, we use the Mississippi River basin as a case study for ecology in times of scarcity.

**Abstract F**

Critical thinking, or higher-order thinking skills, are considered essential for higher education across academic disciplines. Reflecting current trends, critical thinking has been introduced into language classrooms,especially in writing and reading classes. Language teaching researchers have carried out experiments in critical thinkig through various pedagogies, and Thai educators are following the same path.This paper aims to review the range of critical-thinking definitions proposed according to various theoretical frameworks, and the widely accepted models of learning, and then looks at ways to assess this cognitive skill.The paper then focuses on the implementation of critical thinking in Thai language classrooms, particularly in reading and writing classes.Classroom research is also considered in order to investigate the research trends in the Thai environment.