The Seven-Sentence Abstract.

Try writing the following sentences, in order:

1. What is the question? (Write it *as* a question, and see if it sounds good that way.) If you can express it in language that an economist outside your field can understand, do it.

2. Why is the question important? Why might it matter for policy, e.g.? Why might it matter for our understanding of the fundamentals of behavior?

3. Why is the existing literature deficient? (Maybe start this sentence with the word "Unfortunately," as in "Unfortunately, no reliable data (*or appropriate technique, or whatever)* have been brought to bear on this question…" Or something like that…

4. What are you doing that's different, exciting, better? Is it a new data set? A new way of looking at the problem? An innovative methodology? Explain your niche.

5. What did you find?

…And now for the final two…

6. What is the *intuition* for your results? Is there an easy way to explain why you found what you found?

7. What do your results mean for the Grand Scheme of Things? (As in, "My findings suggest that economists should think harder about…," or, "These results indicate that economists should devote more attention to…")

The next step—editing and revising

1. *Replace abstract words with concrete ones*. Wherever you see "dynamic structure," or "behavioral process," replace those terms with words that can be pictured.

2. *Remove excess words*. Try to express your ideas with fewer words. If you can say it with fewer words, it's almost always easier to understand.