

Abstracts

Vs

Summaries

and

Conclusions



# Definitions from reading

- Informative Abstract : contents in a nutshell, more than a description
- Descriptive Abstract : topics covered, no conclusion or supports
- Hybrid Abstract : presents background from an informative POV, then a descriptive overview
- Executive Summary : informative with management issues highlighted and conclusions



# Context

Context	Abstracts	Summaries
Purpose	To entice the reader to read the full doc	To give details so the reader does not have to read the full doc
Scenario indicators	"Abstract" seen in library references or website "Preview"	"Summary" or "Executive Summary"
Audience	Someone interested in topic	Someone too busy to read all the details
Secondary audience	Librarians, researchers	Executives/managers may read summary, but not whole doc
Author cues the reader...	"Discusses", "includes" or questions ("what if...")	"Summary", "covers"

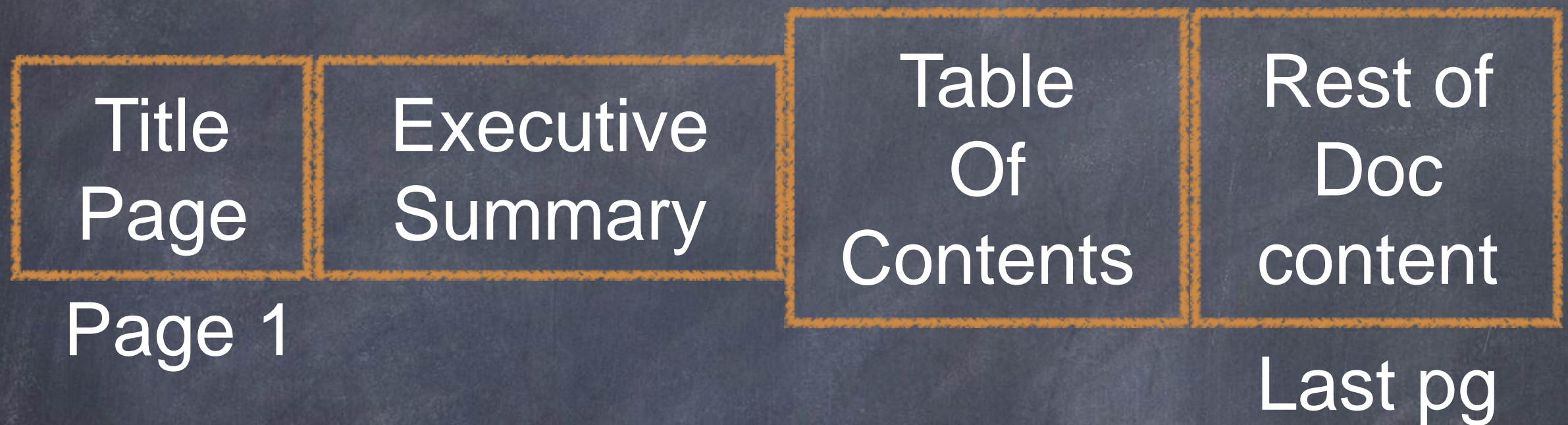


# Form

Form	Abstracts	Summaries
POV	3rd	3rd
Pace	Fast	Medium
Tone	Varies depending on context, but be enticing	Formal
Written as...	Summary-ish, usually, without all details and conclusions	If general: progressive level of disclosure



# Executive Summary : form



Order of info in Executive Summary matches the order of document, paraphrasing each major part.



# Examples

- On Course Notes page



# Skills

Skills	Abstracts	Summaries
Cognitive (thinking)	What would inspire a reader?	What important? What's details?
Writing	Word choice that's enticing	Being concise; using transitions
Ethical scenarios	Mentioning something not in the doc	Missing a main point. Bringing up a point not in the main doc. Changing tone or bias.
When used?	At beginning of articles. Email "avail for download". In databases when researching.	Internship app. Exec Summ: at beginning of proposals, business plans, long docs.,



# How to identify importance?

- Look at headings / outline
- Look at topic sentences
- Pay attention to key words : terms, transitions (can indicate scope change or interpretation), "results"



# Later ... On the job

- Consider that most folks use the terms abstracts and summaries interchangeably, so you need to determine the context and then provide the appropriate one.



# Conclusions vs Summaries

- In TW, conclusions are NOT a summary.
- The reader has already read the doc, they don't want to read the content again.
- Instead the conclusion needs to answer "Now what?"



# Conclusion : Context

Context	Conclusions
Purpose	To wrap up the purpose of the doc. (In TW, rarely a summary)
Scenario indicators	End of document
Audience	Whoever read the rest of the doc
Secondary audience	Executives/managers may read conclusion, but not whole doc
Author queues reader...	"Conclusion", "results"



# Conclusion : Form

Form	Conclusions
POV	3rd
Pace	Med
Tone	Like rest of doc
Written as...	Answers "now what"? or what shall the reader do with this knowledge?



# Conclusion : form

- Make the topic sentence the main point of the document, but not word-for-word. (The only summary in the conclusion)
- Answer "now what?" does the reader do with this knowledge?
  - e.g., Add significance or application
  - e.g., Call for more research
  - e.g., Make a recommendation or a prediction
  - e.g., Identify why this is important to address in <timeframe>



# When writing any of these...

- Use subordination to condense information
- Use past tense
- Use only words with weight (e.g., no expletives)



# To round out the discussion : Introductions

- Purpose :
  - 1) explain purpose
  - 2) encourage reader to continue reading
  - 3) prepare readers to comprehend the rest of the work
- Bad advice for TW: make it snappy, hook the reader, be clever
- Pitfalls : knowing when to quit, being obvious ("In this paper, I will discuss..."), apologizing ("I don't have much...", "I didn't ..."), using well worn statements ("Haste makes waste")