



Executive summaries and abstracts

Contents:

- Abstract vs executive summary.
- Where to put them.
- Tips on writing them.

Abstract vs Executive summary

Abstract:

Purpose:

- Main findings for a *specialist* audience without report in-hand.
- Summary for indexing, contents summary ("shall I read this?").

Format:

1-2 paragraphs of compressed technical language.

Executive summary:

Purpose:

- Main findings for a *general* audience who already have the report.
- Might emphasise recommendations.

Format:

1-2 page mini-report designed for non-specialised decision-making readers.

Executive summary & abstract: Typical Location

- **Abstract:**

On title or following page, or separate.

Doesn't refer to report body (standalone summary).

- **Executive summary:**

After contents (own section), or separate.

Can refer to specific sections in report ("for further information see...").

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Tips: Executive summaries
and abstracts are *summaries*.

- Write them **last**.
(no moving target)
- Specify:
 - Context.
 - Purpose.
 - Approach.
 - Main findings.
 - Recommendations.

Reading

- Beer & McMurrey, chapter 6
"Writing an engineering
report", section "Abstract and
executive summary" (p. 133) .
- <https://www.google.com.tr/search?q=writing+an+abstract+or+executive+summary>
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