Executive summaries and abstracts



Contents:

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

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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.

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Executive summary & abstract: Typical Location

• Abstract:

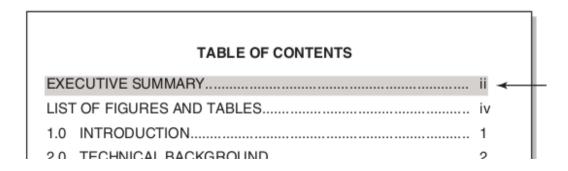
On title or following page, or separate.

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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