



Research project: Abstract and introduction

What is an abstract?

The abstract is a brief summary of the entire research project report. It is highly structured and typically includes:

- background information
- a statement of the problem or a gap in existing knowledge
- the focus or purpose of the research, presented in statement form or as research questions
- a brief overview of the methods used in the research
- findings and conclusions, briefly stated
- a brief summary of recommendations (if required)

An abstract is typically 150-200 words. Therefore, the challenge here is to concisely present a summary of your entire research project.

What is the difference between an abstract and an executive summary?

- They both provide an overview of an entire report
- They are both written after the report is completed
- Abstracts are used for journal articles, research papers and reports and other types of academic writing
- Executive summaries are used in business or industry settings
- Executive summaries are much longer (typically 1-2 pages)

The Introduction

The introduction contains many of the same elements as the abstract; however, these are presented in a lot more detail in the introduction. The introduction typically includes:

- background/contextual information
- a statement of the problem
- the purpose of the report
- a brief review of previous work/research and relationship to the project
- a brief overview of methods or approach
- scope and limitations
- an outline of the rest of report

The introduction **DOES NOT** include:

- findings, conclusions or recommendations