

## Writing an Abstract

The abstract must be a concise and clear paragraph, summarizing the main points within an article or research paper. Abstracts are not intended to serve as detailed outlines of the subject matter.

An abstract is a brief summary of the contents of an article. Often times, the abstract is what attracts the audience to read the entire article. Abstracts typically contain 150–250 words. Abstracts should be located on a separate page following the title page with the word “**Abstract**” centered in boldface at the top of the page. The body of the abstract must be double-spaced.

**Note:** For students following *APA-7* formatting guidelines, *APA* recommends including keywords after the paragraph (with first-line indent applied) and with no additional line spacing between the paragraphs. “*Keywords*” must be italicized, though the actual keywords that follow are not italicized (American Psychological Association, 2020, section 2.10). The keywords highlight the relevant search terms someone might use to find the article in a database. They should be main topic words based upon the subject matter covered.

### Elements of an Abstract

A well-written abstract reflects the following qualities and characteristics:

- ❖ The paragraph needs to be a **clear and concise summary of the content** of the article. Excessive details must be avoided. Each sentence should contain valuable information and should be able to be understood by the audience.
- ❖ Make sure to **portray accurately the purpose** of the article, along with pertinent information.
- ❖ Because abstracts are often read alone, they need to be **self-contained**. Abbreviations and terms unique to a certain field need to be defined.
- ❖ Abstracts should contain **no quotations**. Find a way to summarize and use your own thoughts to communicate the essence of your article to the audience.

For those students required to format papers according to *APA-7* guidelines, see the example of an abstract within our “[Sample APA Paper](#)” for a visual depiction. Be sure to consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association: Seventh Edition* for complete details.

### Reference

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>