

How to Write an Abstract

An abstract is a concise, stand-alone statement that conveys the essential information contained in an article, book, research paper, or document. The abstract is written absolutely last and placed first in the Extended Essay. It is the only portion of the EE that cannot be commented on by your supervisor; however, you can receive feedback from a peer, if you so wish. Written in a direct, non-repetitive style, the abstract should be exactly three (3) paragraphs in length:

The first paragraph should introduce and state the research question **in bold**.

The second paragraph should describe the scope or method of investigation.

The third paragraph states the conclusions of the essay (what was found).

While some exemplars show a one or two-paragraph format for the abstract, you run the risk of being marked down for these easy points if you cram these three distinct, separate requirements into one or two paragraphs! The safe bet is to simply write three, clear paragraphs addressing each of these.

Writing the Abstract:

1. Highlight your sentences in the paper that detail the problem (objective) investigated.
2. Highlight your research question.
3. Identify information (phrases, key words) that shows the scope and sequence of the investigation. Identify only—do NOT explain anything!
4. Condense the conclusion into a few concise sentences.

Words of Advice:

1. For the first draft, don't worry about length. Just try to cover all of the important components that are required in the abstract. Use all of the information that you highlighted and identified as you read through the essay (or article).
2. Take a word count before you begin to edit.
3. Begin editing by deleting words, phrases, and sentences that are less important or provide more explanation than necessary.
4. Look for places where sentences can be combined to omit extra words or condense ideas.
5. Delete unnecessary background information.
6. Do not use jargon, abbreviations, direct quotations, or citations.
7. Avoid writing in the first person (I). Rather than saying, "In this essay, I discuss...", try a more formal approach by starting your abstract with an opening similar to:
 - A. "This essay discusses the effects of _____. Specifically, this paper investigates (restate research question)..."
 - B. "This essay examines how...It attempts to answer the question..."
8. Write to the required word count. Get as close to 300-words as possible.