

# What is an abstract?

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# AIMS OF TODAY'S CLASS

By the end of the workshop, participants will

1. have been introduced to the styles and purposes of different forms of abstract
2. have read a range of abstract examples
3. understand the elements of an effective abstract
4. have practiced writing and refining their own abstract

# Definitions

The word abstract comes from the Latin *abstractum*, which means a condensed form of a longer piece of writing.

# An abstract

- An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work. Components vary according to discipline. **Marketing, and teamwork.**
- An abstract of a social science or scientific work may contain the scope, purpose, results, and contents of the work.
- An abstract of a humanities work may contain the **thesis, background, and conclusion** of the larger work. An abstract is not a review, nor does it evaluate the work being abstracted. While it contains key words found in the larger work, the abstract is **an original document** rather than an excerpted passage.

# An abstract

Abstracts are **concise summaries** that help potential readers **decide if they will read your work**. Since your abstract will often be **your readers' first interaction with your piece**, you must write with them in mind: people will not read what they consider **to be irrelevant or uninteresting**. This presentation will help you write an effective abstract.

# What is an abstract?

An abstract is a snapshot or brief summary of a thesis, conference presentation or journal article.

Some aims of the abstract of a journal article are to:

- Historically contextualize the research in the area
- Concisely present a problem/research question and your response to it
- Outline the methodology/methods used in data collection and analysis
- Indicate findings and discuss/interpret findings
- Present possible implications of findings he findings
- Suggest the significance of this contribution to research in the field
- Possibly indicate the limitations of the research and the prospects for and directions of future research

# What is an abstract?

The purpose of an abstract is to summarize the contents of the paper.

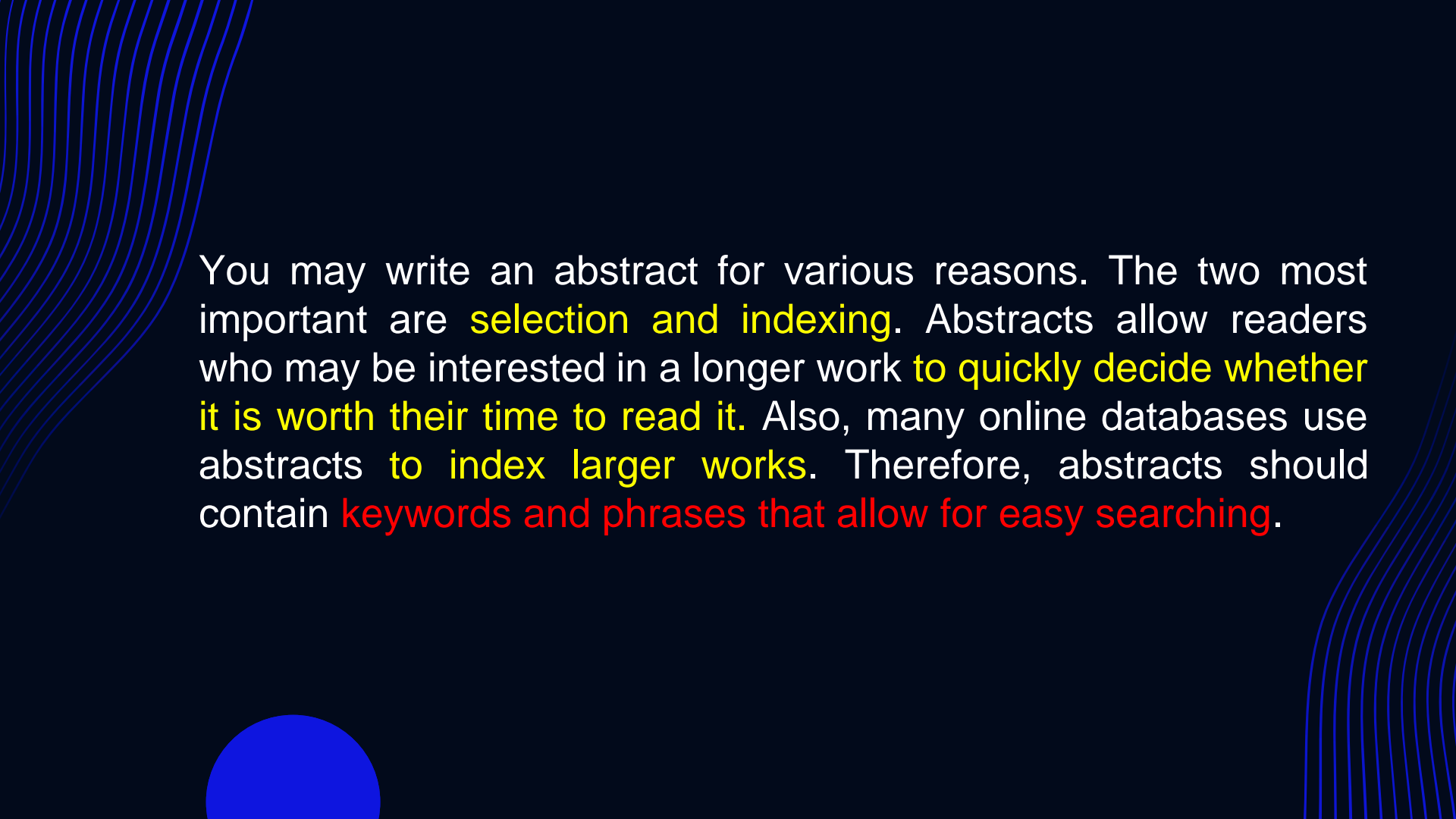
Key points to remember:

1. An abstract briefly explains the salient aspects of the content.
2. Abstracts should be accurate and succinct, self-contained, and readable.
3. The abstract should paraphrase and summarise rather than quote from the paper.
4. Abstracts should relate only to the paper to be presented/assessed.



# Why write an abstract?





You may write an abstract for various reasons. The two most important are **selection and indexing**. Abstracts allow readers who may be interested in a longer work **to quickly decide whether it is worth their time to read it**. Also, many online databases use abstracts **to index larger works**. Therefore, abstracts should contain **keywords and phrases that allow for easy searching**.

# Why improve your writing of abstracts?

“The abstract serves as an advertisement for the article.”

(LaPlaca et.al. 2018, p.203)

“...the abstract can influence the reviewer to develop a favourable bias toward the manuscript.”

(LaPlaca et.al. 2018, p.203)

## Types of abstracts

There are **two types** of abstracts: **descriptive and informative**. They have different aims, so as a consequence they have different components and styles. There is also a third type called **critical**, but it is rarely used.

# Types of abstracts

## Descriptive abstracts

A descriptive abstract **indicates the type of information** found in the work. It **makes no judgments** about the work, **nor does it provide results or conclusions** of the research.

It does **incorporate key words** found in the text and may include the **purpose, methods, and scope** of the research.

Essentially, the descriptive abstract **describes the work being abstracted**. Some people consider it **an outline of the work**, rather than a summary.

Descriptive abstracts are **usually very short**—100 words or less.

# Types of abstracts

## Informative abstracts

**The majority of abstracts are informative.** While they still do not critique or evaluate a work, they do more than describe it. A good informative abstract acts as **a surrogate** for the work itself. **That is**, the writer presents and explains **all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the complete article/paper/book.**

An informative abstract includes the information that can be found in a descriptive abstract (**purpose, methods, scope**) but also includes the **results and conclusions** of the research **and the recommendations** of the author.

The length varies according to discipline, but **an informative abstract is rarely more than 10% of the length of the entire work.** In the case of a longer work, it may be much less.

# How do I write an abstract?

The format of your abstract will depend on the work being abstracted. An abstract of a scientific research paper will contain elements not found in an abstract of a literature article, and vice versa.

However, all abstracts **share several mandatory components**, and there are also some optional parts that you can decide to include or not. When preparing to draft your abstract, keep the following key process elements in mind:

# How do I write an abstract?

THE BASIC LOGIC OF MANY ABSTRACTS FOLLOWS THE

The IMRAD model

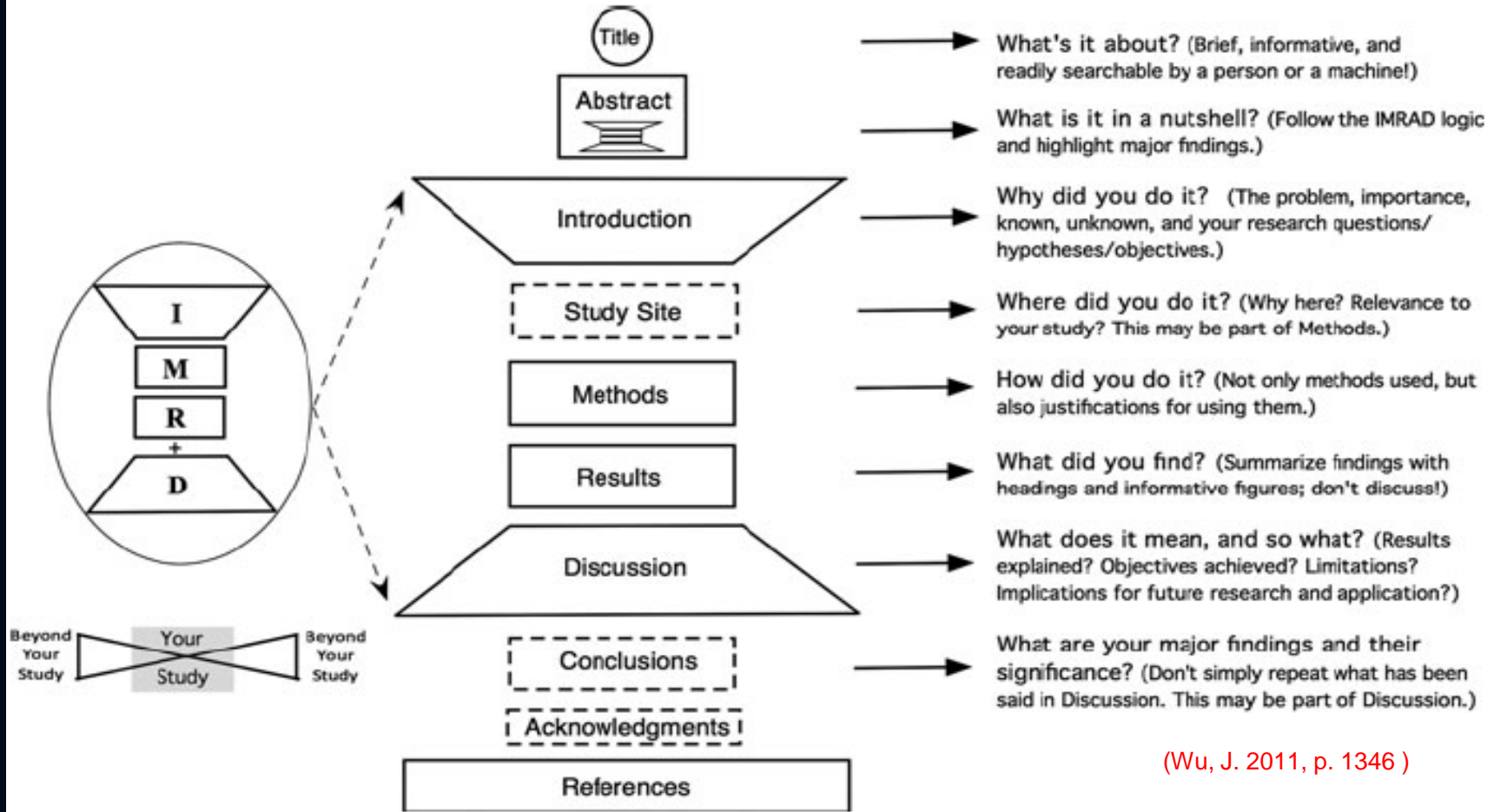
I Introduction

M Methods

R Results

A And

D Discussion



(Wu, J. 2011, p. 1346)



## **Reason for writing:**

What is **the importance of the research**?  
Why would a reader be interested in the larger work?

## **Problem:**

**What problem does this work attempt to solve?**  
**What is the scope of the project?**  
**What is the main argument/thesis/claim?**

## **Methodology:**

An abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study.  
Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research.

## Results:

Again, an abstract of a scientific work **may include specific data** that **indicates** the results of the project.

Other abstracts **may discuss the findings** in a more general way.

## Implications:

What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work?

How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic?

(This list of elements is adapted with permission from Philip Koopman, “How to Write an Abstract.”)

## All abstracts include:

- A full citation of the source, preceding the abstract.
- The **most important information first**.
- The same type and style of language found in the original, including technical language.
- **Key words and phrases** that quickly identify the content and focus of the work.
- Clear, concise, and powerful language.

# Essential Elements

## Accuracy

Just as moviegoers are often frustrated when a film does not live up to the expectations created by its trailer, readers will be frustrated **if your abstract is not an accurate preview** of your paper.

Do not include information in your abstract **that does not appear** in the body of your text.

## Concision

In an abstract, **every word counts**. Make judicious **use of active and passive voice**, and scrutinize **adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases**. While most abstracts range from 150 to 250 words, **obey any limits** requested by the journal, conference, or professor.

# Essential Elements

## Clarity

Your abstract should function as a **stand-alone document**. Avoid unexplained **acronyms** and **jargon** that may be **unfamiliar** to your audience.

## Keywords

When thinking about which keywords to include in and along with your abstract, ask yourself, “What sort of search would return my abstract as a result?” Consider the sort of search terms you use in your own research.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABSTRACT

## Descriptive abstract

Is often very short – no more than 100 words.

## Informative Abstract

Does much more than describe; it is a concise summary of the article.  
Could be  
200-500 words.

## Structured Abstract

An abstract with clearly labelled headings and sections.  
Can be of variable lengths.

# DESCRIPTIVE ABSTRACT

- Indicates the type of information found in an article
- Avoids making judgements about the information
- Does not provide results or conclusions
- Does have key words; may include purpose, methods and scope
- More an outline of the work, than a summary; usually a max of 100 words

## EXAMPLE OF A DESCRIPTIVE ABSTRACT (101 words)

**“Advanced literacy and the place of literary semantics in secondary education: A tool of fictional analysis”**

**This article presents** a tool of fictional analysis for secondary education that aims at providing standards of interpretation and allaying fears of standard imposition. The semantic core of **the tool adapts** the deontic, alethic, and axiomatic modalities used in Dolezel (1998). **Four "extensions" are added** to this core -- "cultural," "visual," "(meta)cognitive," and "epistemic" -- which above all mediate between student experience and pure abstraction, and invite students to think with and about tools and texts rather than blindly apply models. The relationship of the tool with literary theory and the appropriate age for learning such a tool **are also discussed**.





# INFORMATIVE ABSTRACT

- Covers all of the essential points of the paper
- Summarises the background, purpose, focus, methods, results, findings and conclusions
- Often comprised of one paragraph – but could be two or even three
- Length can vary between 200 and 500 words
- Often used in science, engineering and psychology

## 6 How to write an abstract

### EXAMPLE OF AN INFORMATIVE ABSTRACT - Humanities (229 words)

#### Transformative Critique: What Confucianism Can Contribute to Contemporary Education

Critical thinking is currently much celebrated in the contemporary West and beyond, not least in higher education. Tertiary education students are generally expected to adopt a critical attitude in order to become responsible and constructive participants in the development of modern democratic society. Currently, the perceived desirability of critical thinking has even made it into a seemingly successful marketable commodity. A brief online search yields a vast number of books that are mostly presented as self-help manuals to enable readers to enhance their critical abilities. But how should critical thinking be taught? Is it at all possible? Instead of attempting to provide a direct answer to this pressing question, this paper seeks inspiration in a culturally rather remote philosophy of education that hitherto has not been regarded as a stimulant for critical thinking, namely the ancient philosophy of Confucianism. The paper argues that not only are most if not all types of thinking regarded in the West as 'critical' also present in Confucianism, but also that the Confucian philosophy presides over a particular type which increasingly tends to be neglected in the contemporary West; a type that I call 'transformative self-critical attitude'. Through a comparison with the well-known Teaching Perspectives Inventory in higher education, the transformative self-critical attitude is used to elucidate some further aspects of the Confucian philosophy of education that may offer valuable insights to contemporary educators.



# STRUCTURED ABSTRACTS

## An Example

**PURPOSE:** To summarize the main findings from research on structured abstracts.

**METHODS:** A narrative review of all the relevant papers known to the author was conducted.

**RESULTS:** Authors and readers judged the structured abstracts to be more useful than traditional ones. In 1987 the Ad Hoc Working Group for Critical Appraisal of the Medical Literature proposed guidelines for informative seven-headings abstracts. In 1990 Haynes et al. reconsidered the structured abstract of clinical research and review articles and proposed revised guidelines. Nowadays, most abstracts are informative, and the most commonly used structure is IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results And Discussion) format.

**CONCLUSIONS:** There are many variations in the structured-abstract formats prescribed by different journals. But even in recent years, not all abstracts of original articles are structured. More research is needed on a number of questions related to the quality and utility of structured abstracts.

**Key words:** Abstracting and indexing. Review literature. Peer review

*(Guimaraes, C. A. 2006: Structured Abstracts: Narrative Review Acta Cir. Bras. vol.21 no.4 São Paulo July/Aug. )*

# ADVANTAGES of STRUCTURED ABSTRACTS

- *Guides the author to tell ‘a complete story in a nutshell’*
- *It ‘facilitates a faster search for relevant information’ by human or search engine*

## SOME GOOD ADVICE

*Follow the logical order of the structured abstract (without headings)  
even if  
this order is not specified or required by the journal.*

*(Wu, 2011, pp. 1348-49)*

# SUGGESTED STEPS IN WRITING AN ABSTRACT

1. Carefully re-read the entire paper, without interruption
2. Read each section and reduce each section to one or two sentences
3. Reread these sentences to see that no vital information has been excluded
4. Check to see whether you can slightly expand each of these points in the draft abstract
5. Check word length and adjust
6. Edit and check flow of transition and flow of ideas
7. Make key words
8. Check whether title matches contents of abstract
9. Do a final edit/proofread

*( [https://www.victoria.ac.nz/education/pdf/Writing\\_an\\_abstract.pdf](https://www.victoria.ac.nz/education/pdf/Writing_an_abstract.pdf) )*

The background features a solid blue field with a large, dark blue, wavy-edged shape in the center. This shape is filled with numerous thin, parallel, light blue lines that curve and flow across the page, creating a sense of movement and depth.

# **Example 1: Humanities abstract**


# Example

Kenneth Tait Andrews, “‘Freedom is a constant struggle’: The dynamics and consequences of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement, 1960-1984” Ph.D. State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1997 DAI-A 59/02, p. 620, Aug 1998

This dissertation **examines** the impacts of social movements through a multi-layered study of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement from its peak in the early 1960s through the early 1980s. By examining this historically important case, **I clarify the process** by which movements transform social structures and the constraints movements face when they try to do so. The time period studied includes the expansion of voting rights and gains in black political power, the desegregation of public schools and the emergence of white-flight academies, and the rise and fall of federal anti-poverty programs.

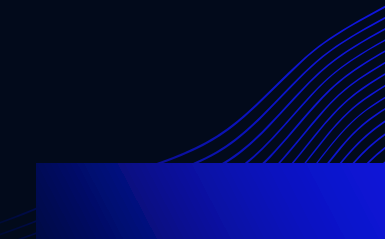
**I use two major research strategies:** (1) **a quantitative analysis of county-level data** and (2) **three case studies**. **Data have been collected from archives, interviews, newspapers, and published reports.**





This dissertation **challenges** the argument that movements are inconsequential. Some view federal agencies, courts, political parties, or economic elites as the agents driving institutional change, but typically these groups acted in response to the leverage brought to bear by the civil rights movement. The Mississippi movement attempted to forge independent structures for sustaining challenges to local inequities and injustices. By propelling change in an array of local institutions, movement infrastructures had an enduring legacy in Mississippi.

Now let's break down this abstract into its component parts to see how the author has distilled his entire dissertation into a ~200-word abstract.



## What the dissertation does

This dissertation **examines** the impacts of social movements through a multi-layered study of the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement from its peak in the early 1960s through the early 1980s. By examining this historically important case, I clarify the process by which movements transform social structures and the constraints movements face when they try to do so.

# How the dissertation does it

The time period studied in this dissertation includes the expansion of voting rights and gains in black political power, the desegregation of public schools and the emergence of white-flight academies, and the rise and fall of federal anti-poverty programs. I use two major research strategies: (1) a quantitative analysis of county-level data and (2) three case studies.

## **What materials are used**

Data have been collected from archives, interviews, newspapers, and published reports.

## Conclusion

This dissertation challenges the argument that movements are inconsequential. Some view federal agencies, courts, political parties, or economic elites as the agents driving institutional change, but typically these groups acted in response to movement demands and the leverage brought to bear by the civil rights movement.

## Keywords

social movements  
Civil Rights Movement  
Mississippi  
voting rights  
desegregation

(Abstracts – The Writing Center • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ([unc.edu](http://unc.edu)))

Sample Abstracts for Writing | UNSW Current Students

[https://wikieducator.org/VirtualMV/Research/Abstract\\_\(Tiny\\_Text\)](https://wikieducator.org/VirtualMV/Research/Abstract_(Tiny_Text))

# The Application of a Mixed Teaching Model to the Academic English Teaching for Graduate Students at Inner Mongolia University

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Foreign Languages College, Inner Mongolia University, Hohhot, China.

DOI: 10.4236/ce.2020.112008 PDF HTML XML 422 Downloads 798 Views

Citations

## Abstract

This paper **explores** the application of a mixed teaching model of Task-Based Learning (TBL), Collaborative-Inquiry Model (CIM) and MOOCs to the academic English teaching for graduate students at Inner Mongolia University, China. Teaching tasks of eight units are assigned for students to learn through the online course on MOOC in advance. Graduate students are grouped to work and cooperate with one another to complete the presentations of their learning results.



A five-year teaching practice indicates that 1) graduate students appear more active in class than students taught in traditional class; 2) the writing quality of abstracts is greatly improved through the cooperative learning pattern; 3) students show more satisfaction for the course than ever before regarding the teacher's help for their academic activities. The application of the new teaching model has not only benefited the Inner Mongolia University (IMU) students, but also set up a pioneering example in teaching reform for graduate students and provided valuable experiences for other universities in ethnic areas.

### Keywords


Mixed Teaching Model, Graduate Students, Academic English, Reading and Writing

Wu, Z. , Guo, Y. and Wei, L. (2020) The Application of a Mixed Teaching Model to the Academic English Teaching for Graduate Students at Inner Mongolia University. *Creative Education*, 11, 105-114. doi: 10.4236/ce.2020.112008.

Jiang, Y. (2020) Application of the Mind Map in Learning English Vocabulary. Open Access Library Journal, 7, 1-4. doi: 10.4236/oalib.1106484.  
Investigating the collocations available to EAP writers

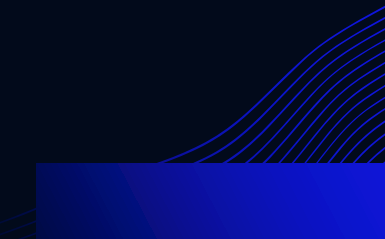
### Abstract

Studies on the productive use of collocations have enabled researchers to harness a wealth of information about the phenomenon. However, most such studies focus on the collocations that come to the surface in finished texts, and have not been able to capture the range of collocational choices available for writers to choose from as they write. The present **investigation addresses** this gap by examining the collocations users of academic English at a British university were able to recall when presented with a selection of general academic writing frames.



The study **examined** the collocations instinctively available to a group of 90 academics, tutors of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and students at PhD, MA and undergraduate levels in an academic writing gap-filling test where more than one collocation could be used in each gap.

The results **indicate that** experience of English academic writing plays a more decisive role than having English as a first language (L1) in the collocations effortlessly available to EAP users.



# the most common mistakes which occurred in the abstract

1. The most common mistakes which occurred in the abstract.

Students should:

- x prefer short words of Anglo-Saxon origin to long words of Latin origin (e.g. use to utilize);
- x use the right collocations such low speed, high speed ...;
- x avoid using colloquial words (so, stuff ...);
- x not use the abbreviation etc. at all because it is not academic;
- x always explain the acronyms first;
- x always use informal style of writing
- write short sentences (20 words at maximum); and
- x avoid redundant phrases because the academic style is factual.

# Language Focus

([https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fis.muni.cz%2Fel%2Fmed%2Fjaro2016%2FaVLAW061%2Fodp%2FACADEMIC\\_WRITING\\_SESSION\\_2\\_MARCH\\_30.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fis.muni.cz%2Fel%2Fmed%2Fjaro2016%2FaVLAW061%2Fodp%2FACADEMIC_WRITING_SESSION_2_MARCH_30.doc&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK))

# Language Focus

## AUTHORIAL 'VOICE' IN THE ABSTRACT

### Personal or Impersonal?

*Wallwork (2016, p.223) identifies 4 possible styles in writing the abstract and the paper:*

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| STYLE 1 | <b>"I found that <math>x = y</math>."</b>           | (first person singular – active voice) |
| STYLE 2 | <b>"We found that <math>x = y</math>."</b>          | (first person plural – active voice)   |
| STYLE 3 | <b>"It was found that <math>x = y</math>."</b>      | (passive voice)                        |
| STYLE 4 | <b>"The authors found that <math>x = y</math>."</b> | (third person plural – active voice)   |

# Language Focus

## What tenses should be used in the abstract?

The two most common tenses used in an abstract are:

### PRESENT SIMPLE

- *Describe what author is trying to show:* **“We show, we investigate...”**
- *Describe a common opinion or view of the topic:* **“The phenomenon is essentially random...”**
- *Refer to action carried out in experiments:* **“We show that such and such is the case...”**
- *Give conclusions:* **“X appears to have a strong positive correlation with Y, despite....”**

### PAST SIMPLE

- *Describe what they did* **“The authors examined...and found that...”**

# Language Focus

## What tenses should be used in the abstract?

Both the present perfect and the present perfect continuous tenses describe a situation which was true in the past, and is still true now.

### PRESENT PERFECT

“These phenomena have been studied for decades.”

### PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

“Such results have been appearing in the literature since 1978.”

Wallwork (2016, p.225)



# Language Focus

## **What tenses should be used in the abstract?**

1. Written in the active voice instead of the passive.
2. Present tense used to discuss results and conclusions.
3. Past tense used to discuss measured outcomes.

# English for Writing Research Papers

## Useful Phrases

### 1. Establishing why your topic (X) is important

X is the main / leading / primary / major cause of .....

Xs are a common / useful / critical part of.....

Xs are among the most widely used / commonly discussed / well-known / well-documented /

widespread / commonly investigated types of ...

X is recognized as being / believed to be / widely considered to be the most important ...

It is well known / generally accepted / common knowledge that X is ...

X is increasingly becoming / set to become a vital factor in ...

Xs are undergoing a revolution / generating considerable interest in terms of ...

Xs are attracting considerable / increasing / widespread interest due to ...

X has many uses / roles / applications in the field of ...

A striking / useful / remarkable feature of .....

The main / principal / fundamental characteristics of X are:

X accounts / is responsible for.....

# Introductory sentences

The paper/article

discusses/deals with/analyses/considers/explains/describes/establishes/introduces .....  
develops/presents/provides/studies/represents/features/contains/concentrates on .....

covers/suggests/proposes/shows .....

demonstrates the feasibility of .....

opens up a new field/issue

gives/aims to give a comprehensive account of .....

offers a solution to .....

serves as an introduction to .....

The main objective/goal/purpose of the paper/article is .....

## Common mistakes:

Wrong: Right:

In this paper there/it is presented a novel This paper presents a novel method of .....  
method of ..... In this paper, a novel method of ..... is presented

# Introduction

In most cases, the Introduction section is treated as a whole and is not divided into subsections.

The subheadings below should only help you organize the information.

## Problem background, state of the art

..... plays an important/vital role in .....

..... is an important issue for .....

..... is extensively/widely used in .....

..... is a very effective method for .....

In the last few years there has been a growing interest in .....

Quite recently, considerable attention has been paid to .....

..... have/has been gaining importance in recent years .....

..... have/has been utilized in many applications such as .....

# Literature review/Summary of previous research

1- Referring to the sources in general

Current research on ..... is focused on .....

Previous studies indicate that .....

The literature on ..... shows a variety of approaches

2- Referring to individual authors

..... and ..... are discussed in [3] and [6].

X [4] and Y [3] indicate that .....

X et al. [1] argue that .....

One of the first examples of ..... is presented in [2].

Another/The latest solution is described in [3].

The results obtained/offered by X in [5] suggest that .....

Recently, several authors [4], [5], [7] have proposed (a new theory) .....

X [2] and X [5] have demonstrated that .....

## - Saying that little research has been done in a particular field

-However, to the author's/authors' best knowledge, very few publications can be found/are available in the literature that discuss/address the issue of ....

-To the author's/authors' knowledge, ..... has/have been scarcely investigated from the point of view of ...../from the theoretical point of view.

## - Pointing out limitations of previous research

A key limitation of this research is that (it does not address the problem of .....)

The major drawback of this approach is .....

However, most of the previous studies do not take into account .....

This approach may not be practical/orthodox/conventional in all situations.

Reference [3] analyses and compares various aspects of ..... . Nevertheless, there are still some interesting and relevant problems to be addressed.

However, studies on ..... are still lacking.

The problem with this approach is in that it .....

# Problem statement, purpose/main objective of the paper

- Problem statement and description of the objective of the paper are very specific parts of the paper and the phrases used depend on the nature of the problem. Examples showing how closely this part is related to the literature review and previous research are given below

Based on the approach presented in [3], the purpose of this paper is to ....

In this paper, while we refer to our earlier work [2], [3], and [4], the focus is different. Like most authors, we .....

The objective/aim of this paper/study is to propose .....

The paper presents/proposes a new approach to .....

This article introduces a new type of .....

In this paper, we/the authors offer .....

In this paper, we explore the possibility of .....

In this study, a new technique that improves ..... is suggested.

# Materials and Methods/Methods of Approach

- Describing what was done and how it was done

We started by investigating ....

We designed a new technique for .....

We used a new approach.

These experiments were carried out to find out .....

In order to verify the validity of the .... method, we carried out several experiments.

All the tests/measurements were carried out at room temperature.

The (signals) were measured before and after .....

To illustrate ....., a simulation was performed.

The .... analysis was performed in order to .....

We checked for the presence of .....



# Referring to/Describing figures, graphs, tables, diagrams

Fig. 2 shows/presents/depicts/outlines/illustrates/represents .....

Fig. 3 gives an example of .....

Such cases are depicted in the following figures.

This is illustrated in Fig. 5.

..... is/are shown/given in Figs. 3 and 4.

..... can be found in Fig. 8.

Consider Fig. 2, which plots ..... versus/against .....

As can be seen from Figs. 5 and 3, .....

As shown in Fig. 1, .....

As follows from the figures shown above, .....

From this figure it can be seen that .....

For the resulting plot, see Fig. 2.

For visual representation of the dependence ..... the reader is referred to Tables V and VI.

Table II summarizes .....

The graph/diagram suggests/indicates that .....

## Common mistake

### Wrong

As shown in the Fig. 1

The Fig. 2 presents

### Right

As shown in Fig. 1

..... Fig. 2 presents .....

# Results

Some of the phrases listed under Materials and Methods may also be suitable for the

Results section, e.g. summarizing what was done, referring to diagrams, graphs, etc.

It has been found that .....

The results show that .....

The results thus obtained are compatible with .....

The overall measurement results are summarized in Table II.

As mentioned earlier/above, .....

The previous sections have shown that .....

This method is based on .....

The method was tested on .....

# Conclusion(s)

The Conclusion(s) section usually starts with

- Stating the objective

The objective presented in the Conclusion(s) section should agree with the objective stated in the Introduction. For suitable phrases see Introduction and Discussion.

- **Drawing conclusions**

From the research that has been carried out/done/conducted/performed/undertaken, it is possible to conclude that .....

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the research into ..... has been very successful. From the outcome of our investigation it is possible to conclude that .....

The findings of our research are quite convincing, and thus the following conclusions can be drawn: .....

Summing up the results, it can be concluded that .....

.....

The results/data obtained indicate/have indicated/suggest/show that .....

The existence of (these effects ) implies that

# Conclusion(s)

In conclusion, it is evident that this study has shown .....

This paper has clearly shown that .....

It has been demonstrated/shown/found that .....

The results/data obtained indicate/have indicated/suggest/show that .....

The existence of (these effects ) implies that .....

*It has been demonstrated/shown/found that In conclusion, it is evident that this study has shown .....*

*This paper has clearly shown that .....*

*It has been demonstrated/shown/found that*

# Stating the aim of your paper and its contribution

In this report / paper / review / study we .....

This paper **outlines / proposes / describes / presents** a new approach to ...

This paper **examines / seeks to address / focuses on / discusses / investigates** how to solve

...

This paper is an overview of / a review of / a report on / a preliminary attempt to .....

The present paper **aims to validate / call into question / refute** Peng's findings regarding ...

**X is presented / described / analyzed / computed / investigated / examined / introduced / discussed** in order to .....

The aim of our work / research / study / analysis **was to further / extend / widen / broaden** current knowledge of .....

Our knowledge of X is largely based on very limited data. The aim of the research was thus /therefore / consequently to.....

# Stating the aim of your paper and its contribution

The aim of this study is to study / evaluate / validate / determine / examine / analyze / calculate / estimate / formulate ...

This paper calls into question / takes a new look at / re-examines / revisits / sheds new light on ...

With this in mind / Within the framework of these criteria / In this context we tried to ...

We undertook this study / initiated this research / developed this methodology to ...

We believe that we have found / developed / discovered / designed an innovative solution to ...

We describe / present / consider / analyze a novel / simple / radical / interesting solution for ...

# Indicating the gap in knowledge and possible limitations

In spite of / Despite its shortcomings, this method has been widely applied to ...

However, there is still a need for / has been little discussion on ...

Moreover, other solutions / research programs / approaches have failed to provide ...

Most studies have only focused / tended to focus on ...

To date / Until now this methodology has only been applied to ...

There is still some / much / considerable controversy surrounding ...

There has been some disagreement concerning / regarding / with regard to whether

There is little / no general agreement on ...

The community has raised some issues / concerns about ...

Concerns have arisen / been raised which question / call into question the validity of ...

In the light of recent events in x, there is now some / much / considerable concern about ...

## A. Topic sentence - Introduction

The introductory sentence is optional. **It allows the writer to focus the reader's attention on the topic of the study and the reasons why that subject is worth investigating.**

Here are some examples:

- a. According to recent evidence, racial and ethnic discrimination in housing continues to be widespread. [This paper...]



b. Central city households who subsidize local public sector goods through local property taxes have an incentive to flee from the city or to change the jurisdiction's boundary. [The authors focus on...]

c. There is an active debate in transition economies about the extent to which employee and foreign ownership ought to be encouraged or discouraged in privatization, but empirical evidence is scarce. [This paper ...]

d. Since 1978, China has experienced four episodes of economic fluctuations, during which the government used macro controls to restore stability. [This paper ...]

Exercise 3. Read the examples above and discuss the following points.

1. Are introductory statements general or specific?
2. Are they in first person style or third person style?
3. What tenses are used?

## B. Subject/Purpose

§ **Third person style**: The / **This paper analyzes, investigates, explores**, article examines, re-examines, outlines, thesis describes, shows, introduces, dissertation evaluates, considers ...

§ **First person style**: In this paper I / we\* analyse, investigate, explore, article examine, re-examine, outline, theses describe, show, introduce, dissertation evaluate, consider...

Exercise 4. Read the sentences below and fill in the gaps with one of the following verbs:

develops - calls - argues - provides - looks - consider

1. This paper \_\_\_\_\_ an axiomatic basis for a representation of personal preferences in which the utility of an act can be expressed as an expected value of conditional utilities of the act given any set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive scenarios, under a unique subjective probability.

Exercise 4. Read the sentences below and fill in the gaps with one of the following verbs:

develops - calls - argues - provides - looks - consider

2. The authors \_\_\_\_\_ a broad class of situations where a society must choose from a finite set of alternatives.

3. This paper \_\_\_\_\_ that the analysis of these games involves a key technical issue.

Exercise 4. Read the sentences below and fill in the gaps with one of the following verbs:

develops - calls - argues - provides - looks - consider

4. This paper \_\_\_\_\_ **at** the effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in reducing the time that manufacturing plants spend in a state of non-compliance.

5. This study \_\_\_\_\_ **into** question the established view that lack of information on clean-up cost functions represents a serious problem in designing an optimal charge on polluting waste discharged by N point sources.

Exercise 4. Read the sentences below and fill in the gaps with one of the following verbs:

develops - calls - argues - provides - looks - consider

6. This paper \_\_\_\_\_ a model of corporate hierarchy in which workers accumulate heterogeneous human capital suitable for different positions within the hierarchy.

## C. Hypothesis/Prediction

In an abstract, the founding hypothesis and related prediction can be expressed in several ways. They can also be included in the introductory sentence or in the Subject/Purpose statement. Read the following excerpts and notice how each author has expressed them.

1. Henry George (1839-1897) has left an intellectual legacy which is shrouded under a cloak of controversy. Unprofessional economists who focused attention on the single-tax proposal and condemned Henry George's teaching, root and branch, were hardly just to him ..." (Schumpeter 1954). This essay tries to do justice to Henry George from the point of view of economic theory and relevant economic practical questions in 1997. [...]



2. [...] Based on a brief theoretical outline, this paper deals with those two issues. It will be argued in favor of an anti-inflation policy by the ECB, based on monetary targets with securities repurchase transactions (repos) as the central instrument. Rediscount quotas, which should only be available for a market based interest rate, should play a secondary role. To secure and stabilize the need for base money, interest bearing minimum reserves should be held at the ECB, and the ECB should be able to offer banks with temporary liquidity needs collateralized credits for a penalty rate. [...]

3. [...] It is argued that updated preferences necessarily have one affine indifference curve but that other indifference curves are unrestricted. [...]

4. [...] While the model is consistent with some features in the data, we reject the hypothesis that factor markets worked perfectly and find support for the historian's intuition regarding the disproportionate impact of land inequality in the countryside. [...]

5. [...] The hypothesis examined is that the greater the investor's flexibility, the easier it is for him to change his portfolio depending on his results, the more willing he will be to accept risks. [...]

Online exercise. Use the Web and a major search engine to look for what verbs and/or what adjectives collocate with the terms hypothesis, theory, model, principle, framework (and their respective plurals).

#### D. Approach/Methodology

Sometimes, the Approach/Methodology sentences are expressed in passive form.

Exercise 5. Read the excerpts below and underline all **the passive verb forms**.

1. The single tax proposal is looked at from the point of view of constitutional economics, and the wider applicability of Henry George's basic notions is emphasized!

2. Analysis of data on incorporation and investment decisions, the relative sensitivity of the stock prices of firms with different asset mobility to political events, and the market for office space most strongly support hypotheses about credibility, adaption, and demand augmentation.

3. A model of farm marketing is developed for the period 1913-28 and is embedded in a general equilibrium model for the Soviet economy.

4. We test whether patterns of income inequality were consistent with the predictions of a market-clearing, neoclassical model linking land and labor endowment through factor markets to household income.

5. Building on the work of P. N. Courant (1978), the paper develops a housing search model and measures the cost of discrimination by its impact on the through housing search. The cost of discrimination is then calculated for a representative sample of households.

6. A discussion of changes in the organizational structure and legal environment surrounding gold production is followed by a description of state gold purchasing and storage activities.

7. In an application to US GDP, it is found that inferences about the nature of the trend in output are not robust to changes in the specification for short-run fluctuations.

Exercise 6. Complete each sentence below with **the present tense, passive voice, of the verb in parentheses**.

1. The Malmquist productivity index, constructed using nonparametric linear programming methods, \_\_\_\_\_ (to employ) for the relevant comparisons.

2. Characteristics of the incidence of employee and foreign ownership and associated firm performance \_\_\_\_\_ (to examine).

Exercise 6. Complete each sentence below with the present tense, passive voice, of the verb in parentheses.

3. Respondents' stated preferences for attributes related to various electricity-generation scenarios \_\_\_\_\_ (to analyse) using a series of pairwise ratings.

4. In the standard case of "adverse-selection," a firm \_\_\_\_\_ (to show) to have an unbounded incentive to under-report marginal clean-up costs.



Exercise 6. Complete each sentence below with the present tense, passive voice, of the verb in parentheses.

5. First the employment expectations of companies for 1997 and in the medium term \_\_\_\_\_ (to describe) for eastern and western Germany. This \_\_\_\_\_ (to follow) by analyses of the personnel inflows and outflows in the first half of 1996, in which the evaluation differentiates between enterprises with expanding employment, declining enterprises and stagnating enterprises.

Exercise 7. Transform the following sentences from passive into active starting with the phrase given.

1. The notion of civil society is initially considered in the light of intellectual history and differentiated into a number of constitutive concepts such as trust, commercial society, and a civil network of interpersonal relationships.  
This article

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Exercise 7. Transform the following sentences from passive into active starting with the phrase given.

2. A simple game-theoretic framework is applied to analyse international cooperation by focusing on the prisoner's dilemma on the one hand and bargaining in the Coasian sense on the other.

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## E. Findings/Discussion

Research findings can be communicated in a series of different ways. However, they are often introduced by the terms result/results or findings. See below how they collocate with verbs and adjectives.

1. With verbs The results show, state, suggest, uncover, findings indicate, imply, provide...

2. With adjectives

striking, contradictory Main / partial / empirical RESULTS (are)  
different, consistent with

## Examples

1. The main result states that if the payoff functions are semicontinuous and strongly quasi-concave then an Epsilon-Nash equilibrium in pure strategies exists for positive Epsilon.
2. The results obtained through the estimation of a series of structural VAR models are consistent with this view and indicate also that deflation affected output mainly by increasing real wages.
3. The result holds for a large class of consistent and monotone rules, including the Constrained Equal Award, the Propositional Rule, and many other well known rules. Results, however, are often supported by some evidence.

## Examples

1. The main result states that if the payoff functions are semicontinuous and strongly quasi-concave then an Epsilon-Nash equilibrium in pure strategies exists for positive Epsilon.
2. The results obtained through the estimation of a series of structural VAR models are consistent with this view and indicate also that deflation affected output mainly by increasing real wages.
3. The result holds for a large class of consistent and monotone rules, including the Constrained Equal Award, the Propositional Rule, and many other well known rules.

Results, however, are often supported by some evidence.

1. [...] The evidence suggests that five price series exhibit stochastic trends, while the remaining six price series appear to be stationary around a deterministic trend.
2. [...] Furthermore, quantitative evidence is presented supporting the view that Federal Reserve monetary policy was constrained by international considerations.
3. [...] The authors find, on the contrary, consistent evidence that, first, resources went where the benefits to patients were greatest, and, second, resources were appropriately allocated in terms of their opportunity cost once provision exceeded certain thresholds.[...]
4. We provide new evidence on the effectiveness of disclosure requirements by examining firm behavior in response to disclosures of TRI emissions.

Online exercise. Use the Web and a major search engine to find other occurrences of the term evidence and discuss how and in what context it is used.

F. Conclusions      Read the following excerpts and analyse how conclusions are drawn and discussed.

1. In light of these results, we believe that efforts to eliminate SOES based on volatility considerations are unwarranted.
2. Analysis of the conditions that have to be met, illustrated with examples of attitudes and preferences within Europe, leads to the conclusion that we are unlikely to see the end of the nation state in the near future either in Europe or anywhere else.



3. The main conclusion of the paper is that the Italian depression, comparable to that of other major industrialized countries, was the combined result of a contraction in world demand and of the restrictive monetary policies imposed by the rules of the Gold Standard.

4. Through his careful discussion of the foreseeable problems, the author reaches the conclusion that Hong Kong is "useful pretty much the way it is" to China and does not see China disturbing the balance.

5. These conclusions for nine consultant specialties reinforce similar conclusions for two other services, whose allocations were made by central government (the Scottish Home and Health Department) and general medical practitioners.

## 4. Cohesion

### Using Repetition and Reference Words to Emphasize Key Ideas in Your Writing


Cohesion is the glue that holds a piece of writing together. In other words, if a paper is cohesive, it sticks together from sentence to sentence and from paragraph to paragraph. Cohesive devices certainly include transitional words and phrases (linking words and expressions), such as therefore, furthermore, or for instance, that clarify for readers the relationships among ideas in a piece of writing. However, transitions aren't enough to make writing cohesive. Repetition of keywords and use of reference words are also needed for cohesion.

## Repetition of Keywords

We can tie sentences or paragraphs together by repeating certain keywords from one sentence to the next or from one paragraph to the next. This repetition of keywords also helps to emphasize the main idea of a piece of writing.


### 5. Some final suggestions

Write the abstract only when the document is finished. Abstracts written before then are just previews.



If you are forced to write an abstract before the document is completed, think about its purpose and write a topic sentence. Keep in mind that you'll need to rewrite the abstract when the document is finished because it will no longer accurately reflect the contents of the document.

Before starting the abstract, list your thoughts on the document. Group related items together. Prioritise the list and put the most important group first. The first few groups form the core of the topic sentence. The rest lead to supporting sentences.



If you can't create a topic sentence (i.e. the introductory statement), write the supporting sentences first. The topic sentence may then become obvious.

Write for an audience not necessarily up to speed in your subject area. This is important because you never know who will read your abstract.

Choose acronyms, abbreviations, and technical terms carefully as they may confuse many readers.

Define the scope of the project in the abstract.

Reread your abstract after several days have passed.

Remove all superfluous information.

References Writing up Research - The Abstract, online at  
<http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/el21abst.htm>.

How to Write an Abstract, online at  
<http://www.okstate.edu/education/jshs/abstract.htm>.

LEO - Literary Education Online: Transition Cues, online at  
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/transitioncues.html>.

### III. Join together the following sentences.

1. She wasn't very rich. She gave money to the beggar. (although)

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2. He left early. He wanted to arrive on time. (so that)

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3. You can go out tonight. You must tell us where you are going. (provided)

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4. I don't earn a big salary. But if I did, I wouldn't buy a car. (even if)

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5. Take a sandwich. There might be no restaurant. (in case)

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### III. Join together the following sentences.

6. There was a lot of noise. He managed to sleep. (despite)

---

7. Sue likes Opera. Joe prefers jazz. (They have different tastes.) (whereas)

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8. The weather was bad. They enjoyed the trip. (even though)

---

9. He had the 'flu. He went to work. (in spite of)

---

10. You have to put the alarm on. If not, it won't work. (unless)

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IV. Test what you have learnt. Select a suitable conjunction in each sentence.

1. Polls show that Tony Blair is the most popular Prime Minister this century.  
\_\_\_\_\_, there are even members of his own party who are uneasy with his approach.

**In particular However For instance**

2. There are some slight variations in temperature, but \_\_\_\_\_  
26 to 27°C should be expected.

**consequently otherwise as a rule**

3. The two main Channel Islands, \_\_\_\_\_ Jersey and Guernsey, are much closer to France than to England.

**for example namely in particular**



IV. Test what you have learnt. Select a suitable conjunction in each sentence.

4. It was announced that nurses' working hours would be increased by 25%.  
\_\_\_\_\_, even fewer trainee nurses are expected to join the profession.

**As a result So that Likewise**

5. Sales of CDs have experienced a small but steady fall over the past 12 months. \_\_\_\_\_, vinyl records have seen an increase in their share of the market, up to 1.7%.

**Above all Correspondingly In contrast**

#### IV. Test what you have learnt. Select a suitable conjunction in each sentence.

6. The Vice Chancellor explained that in light of the current financial climate and because of unexpected bad debts, it would be necessary to peg salary levels at their current level for all grades of staff. \_\_\_\_\_, no-one was getting a pay rise.

**Nevertheless In other words Similarly**

7. It is clear, therefore, that the situation in Brazil will improve only slowly. \_\_\_\_\_ the economic problems being experienced in Japan, the outlook is slightly more optimistic.

**Furthermore In comparison With reference to**

#### IV. Test what you have learnt. Select a suitable conjunction in each sentence.

8. In order to try to reduce car use in the inner cities, the government has announced new restrictions on company parking spaces and \_\_\_\_\_ , a new tax on individual car use.

**as well as in addition in the same way**

9. Essays must be handed in by the deadline, \_\_\_\_\_ they will not be marked.

**obviously otherwise as a result**

10. \_\_\_\_\_ it has been shown that fractures can occur at even relatively low pressures, the use of the material should not be completely discounted.

**Nevertheless Because Even though**

# Abstract Worksheet

## Purpose/Problem

What is the problem?

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What is your purpose? \_\_\_\_\_

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# Methods

What are the three most important details about your methodology? Do these relate to your purpose?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Results

What are your three most important findings?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion/Implications

How do your results connect to your purpose?

\_\_\_\_\_

(Abstracts.pdf (umaryland.edu))