

Useful Rules for Professionally Written Abstracts

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Summary

Dr. Alyssa Colton's webnote placed on Falcon Scientific Editing in July, 2016 tackles five updated tips for writing a good professional abstract. Besides, we recommend to read old and current abstracts and full articles published in British English together with browsing the nobel.org site to get acquainted with proceedings and abstracts presented by the winners.

Dr. Alex Sokolov, successful manager of scientific writing has shared with us the following article to be useful for instructors and attendants of courses on Scientific Reasoning. The article posted by Dr. Alyssa Colton on Falcon Scientific Editing website (see: <https://falconediting.com/en/blog/5-golden-rules-for-writing-an-abstract>) on July 12, 2016 tackles five new tips for writing a good professional abstract.

These rules are proposed since the abstract drafting is regarded as one of principal skills for researchers. Mastering five rules described below would assist in making the abstract professionally impeccable. The abstract is supposed to be then submitted as a short communication to a journal or an abstract for consideration at a conference.

Rule 1. Follow the guidelines. Abstracts as communications submitted to a journal are different from the abstracts for conferences. Moreover, different journals, research communities, and fields of science impose various guidelines. Make sure that your abstract is completely in line with what is asked for, that the content fits completely or largely, and that you've carried out all formatting rules requested. Take care of whether there should be a structured abstract or just a single paragraph. Usually structured abstract includes subheads, and few paragraphs composed of a background, methods, results, and conclusions finally completed by key words.

2. Make the abstract having everything but not less or more.

Each abstract should contain about 200-250 words total. Readers should be able to quickly get work's purpose, main imperative, methods, and results. This information should be given in a concise and consistent way. Oppositely, a full-length article or large presentation are supposed to provide for more details and answering questions.

For an abstract to the conference it is important to make clear only one or two particular aspects of current or past research rather than attempt to covering a whole project.

Ordinary abstract is usually lack of citations or bibliographic references, descriptions of routine procedures, assessments or information about details on statistics. Though some comments may be included in the abstract body, readers are focused on specific project and work's outcomes.

3. Use keywords.

Keywords should be added in a separate line after the abstract to relieve electronic database search. APA (American Psychological Association) text formatting implies that everyday words sampling with any relation to researcher's topic is aimed at picking three to five keywords (McAdoo 2015). For example, keywords for a study on vegetable genetics include: *vegetables, genetics, trait, gene, hybrid, or cultivar*.

4. Report main results and conclusions.

An abstract should exhibit what was done in the study rather than explaining future plans to do. Therefore, words such as *expect, anticipate, hope, plan, try, or attempt* should be deflected. It is recommended to keep to the past tense when it would be needed to emphasize that the study was already finished. Principal results, a brief summary of key conclusions should also crown the text of an abstract.

Usage of past text for the results would also mean that the author was determined about own research . The results should be proceeded by proper conclusions, possible implementations and their meaning.

5. Make the title as strong as possible.

Your title makes a lot for the first impression. It should draw the majority of potential readers, including colleagues, conference attendants, editors, reviewers and scientists working beyond your field. So it means the title should draw their attention from the very beginning. In no more than 12 words, the title should explain your subject and the “core” of ongoing study as briefly and transparently as possible. There should be distinct stroke on the main focus and techniques of investigation. Never repeat the title in the abstract body again as you will need the room for detailed research and conclusion. Implication of active verbs usually strengthen a title. For instance, use verbs like “conduct”, “enhance”, “clarify”, “mediate,” “explore” and “reveal.” Use a thesaurus or style guide for better ideas in expressive title wording.

Abstract is a good challenge being written in order to put so much into a short text body. This allows to improve as writing in general, and exercising failed parts and overviewing successful examples of others. To improve abstract-writing skills, the scholar should always pay attention to the abstracts published in prosperous journals or among conference proceedings. In conclusion, we should add that it is very beneficial to read both old and current abstracts and full articles published in British English. It would be also a helpful tip to visit nobel.org site to get familiar with proceedings and abstracts ever posted by the prize winners.

Reference:

Alyssa Colton. 5 Golden Rules for Writing an Abstract. Falcon Scientific Editing, July 12, 2016. <https://falconediting.com/en/blog/5-golden-rules-for-writing-an-abstract>