

Constructing Your Abstract

In many respects, an abstract [summary or synopsis] echoes what is demanded of a research proposal at the beginning of postgraduate studies, namely:

- What is the over-arching claim of the thesis [= argument]?
- What [or who] was investigated and why? [including the framework chosen from relevant debates in the field]?
- What method(s) was employed [including how the creative and exegetical components relate]?
- What conclusion(s) was reached?
- What is the significance of the conclusion(s) in relation to the over-arching claim?

Alternatively, the “what,” “how,” and “why” of an abstract can be constructed around an **implicit** set of headings of the following type: aim or purpose, significance, theory or framework, design or procedure, findings or results.

If not specified, abstracts are usually a maximum of a page in length, that is, no more than about three hundred words.