

ABSTRACT

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Definitions

The word abstract comes from the Latin *abstractum*, which means a **condensed form of a longer piece of writing**. There are two main types of abstract, the **descriptive** and the **informative** abstract. The type of abstract you write depends on the discipline area and whether you are reporting on experimental research.

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Descriptive abstracts

Descriptive abstracts are generally used for **humanities and social science** papers or **psychology essays**. Most descriptive abstracts have certain key parts in common. They are:

- Background
- Purpose
- Particular interest / focus of paper
- Overview of contents (not always included)

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Informative abstracts

Informative abstracts are generally used for **science, engineering or psychology reports**. Most informative abstracts also have key parts in common. They are:

- Background
- Aim or purpose of research
- Method used
- Findings/results
- Conclusion

An effective Abstract

- uses one well-developed paragraph that is **coherent, concise** and **clear** and is able to stand alone as a **unit of information**
- covers all the essential academic elements of the full-length paper, namely the **background, purpose, focus, methods, results** and **conclusions**
- contains no information not included in the paper
- is written in plain English and is **understandable to a wider audience** as well as to **your discipline-specific audience**
- often uses **passive structures** in order to report on **findings**, focussing on the issues rather than people
- uses the **language of the original paper** – often in a **more simplified form** for the **more general reader**
- usually **does not include any referencing**
- in publications (such as journals) is at the beginning of the text but in academic assignments is placed on a separate preliminary page.

Steps for writing an abstract

1. First **re-read** your thesis for an overview.
2. Read **each section** and **shrink** the information in each down to one or **two sentences**.
3. Next **read these sentences** again to **ensure** that they cover the **major points** in your paper.
4. Ensure you have written something for **each of the major points**
5. Check **the word length** and further reduce your words if necessary by cutting out unnecessary words or rewrite some of the sentences into a single, more succinct sentence.
6. Edit

How is an abstract different to an introduction?

Abstract	Introduction
The essence of the whole paper	Introduces the paper
Covers the following academic elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Background* Purpose and focus* Methods* Results (also called as findings)* Conclusions* Recommendations (or Implications, not always relevant)	Covers the following academic elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">* Background* Purpose* Proposition (also sometimes called as point of view or thesis statement)* Outline of key issues* Scope (optional, not always relevant)
Summarises briefly the whole paper including the conclusions.	Introduces the paper and foregrounds issues for discussion.

This **qualitative research** study analyses individual city experiences in relation to macro-issues (i.e.: societal, economic, land use and transportation development) in the context of São Paulo (Brazil) as a global city. **The aim** is to explore a possible interdependency between the macro- and micro-dynamics (i.e.: quality of urban spaces in relation to user's experience) of the city. **Methodology** involves **a combination** of **quantitative** and **qualitative** methods, where the former is used to assess macro-issues in the city while the latter is used to address micro-issues (i.e.: the experience of urban spaces). **Quantitative** data collection **involves** Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and statistics while qualitative data is based in the participation of six individuals living in São Paulo. **Participants documented** their journeys through pictures and subsequent semi structured interviews explored their perception of the built environment. Information gathered from the participants is analysed via journey mapping and photo referencing. **Results** address the quality of urban spaces that is missing from the quantitative macro-analyses. Ultimately, both sets of data are combined to establish a possible interdependency between outer factors shaping macro- and micro-environments. **Critique** on existing urban typologies in São Paulo is made for further evidencing the lack of sensitive and inclusive design solutions in the city. **This approach further anchors** the relation between **citizens** and the **built environment** as it provides insights for the experiential quality of urban spaces. This study aims to **contribute** to the field of **urban planning for development** that is relatable to **societal values** as a way of improving **people's well-being** in an urban context.