

Worksheet for Senior Symposium Abstract Workshops

What is an abstract?

An abstract is a brief statement or summary of the essential content of a written work or a completed project. Your finished abstract will give information concisely but precisely on all of the basic components of your project: 1) A brief statement or definition or central question of your project; 2) necessary background info; 3) your methods; 4) your main finding(s) or creative product; and the significance of your finding(s) or creative product.

Getting started:

List five to eight key words that precisely define your paper, artwork, or project:

Now list five to eight action verbs, such as “explore,” “demonstrate,” “create,” that characterize the actions you performed in your paper, project, or artwork:

Composing the parts of an abstract:

1. Using some of your key words and action verbs, write one to two sentences about the subject of your project or creative work and what specific issues or problems you investigated. Alternatively, you could write the central question of your project, incorporating your key words and action verbs.

2. Write a sentence that describes the goal of your project, using key words.

3. If you wish, write a sentence about what led you to conceive and carry out this project.

4. Write a sentence or two that gives the context of your work for readers unfamiliar with your field and/or discipline.

5. Write a sentence or two about your main finding(s), your main accomplishment(s) in your artwork, or your main accomplishment(s) in your service project. What new knowledge or practices did you create?

6. Write a sentence or two about the significance of your main finding or accomplishment. What does it contribute to your field or your community?

If your project is ongoing, you may indicate this in a final sentence.

Putting it all together:

Put your sentences together in the above order. Revise as needed for the following:

- Unity (for example, the subject of your goal and the subject of what you found are parallel)
- Eliminate repetition
- Replace any passive verbs with active verbs
- Condense and simplify your wording when possible
- Eliminate any details or phrases that might distract a reader from understanding the bigger picture of your project