**Writing Introductions and Abstracts**

There are two main types of introductions for academic papers.

1. For a thesis-driven paper (essay) you typically use several lead-in statements then outline the thesis and the major points you will use to prove that thesis.
2. For a research report, you typically write a summary of your entire report, including topics, and results or findings. The purpose of this is to give the reader an outline of your report so they can decide whether or not read the entire thing. In scientific reports, this type of intro is called an abstract.

Depending on your instructor, the subject area, and the style of report, you may be asked to begin your paper with either style of intro, or both together (the abstract followed by the introduction). Always ask your instructor exactly what they are looking for.

**How to Write Abstracts**

*From the OWL Purdue Website* [*http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/670/03/*](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/670/03/)

The abstract gives a concise summary of the contents of the report.

* Abstracts should be brief (about 100 words)
* self-contained and provide a complete picture of what the study is about
* highlight essential points
* adds no new information but simply summarizes the
* organized just like your experimental report-introduction, literature review, methods, results and discussion
* allow readers to decide whether they want to read the report
* written last during your drafting stage

To write an effective report abstract, follow these four steps:

* Reread your report with the purpose of abstracting in mind. Look specifically for these main parts: purpose, methods, scope, results, conclusions, and recommendations.
* After you have finished rereading your report, write a rough draft WITHOUT LOOKING BACK AT YOUR REPORT. Consider the main parts of the abstract listed in step #1. Do not merely copy key sentences from your report. You will put in too much or too little information. Do not summarize information in a new way.
* Revise your rough draft to: correct weaknesses in organization and coherence, drop superfluous information, add important information originally left out, eliminate wordiness, and correct errors in grammar and mechanics.
* Carefully proofread your final copy.

**Sample Abstracts**



**Personality and foraging decisions in fallow deer, Dama dama.(Report)**

Ulrika A. Bergvall, Alexander Schapers, Petter Kjellander, Alexander Weiss

Animal Behaviour 81.1 (2011): 101+. General OneFile. Web. 4 Jan. 2011.

Abstract:

Recent studies have examined the ecological and evolutionary bases for variation in animal personality. However, only a few such studies have examined how foraging parameters are influenced by different personality domains. In wild ungulates, the trade-off between the time spent on food intake and antipredator behaviour differs between individuals, but the underlying reason for this is not yet well understood. One possibility is that this trade-off reflects personality dimensions such as boldness. To relate foraging decisions to personality we measured personality and performed feeding experiments with familiar and novel food in familiar and novel situations. We measured personality traits in 15 tame fallow deer, using novel object tests (NO), behavioural observations (BO) and personality ratings (PR). Boldness dimensions were found using PR and NO, dominance dimensions were found using BO and PR, and a flexibility dimension was found using BO. Multitrait-multimethod analysis showed that similar dimensions were significantly correlated across different methods and that different dimensions were not significantly correlated, even if measured using the same method. We also found that novel food eaten in familiar situations and familiar food eaten in novel situations were strongly related to boldness but not dominance, flexibility or age. Thus the trade-off between the benefits of gaining more food and the costs of reduced vigilance or increased toxin ingestion reflect boldness. These findings highlight the nature of personality dimensions in ungulates and how boldness impacts foraging behaviour.

**SBI4U Assignment – Writing an Abstract**

Using the instructions and models given in class you need to write an abstract for the article on human-pig hybrids which can be found in your SBI4U class folder (computer desktop).

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| Criteria | Level R | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 |
| Knowledge | Explicit ideas or facts contain errors  Demonstrates little, or highly inaccurate, coverage | Some ideas or facts contain errors or are lacking in helpful details  Demonstrates weak or somewhat inaccurate coverage | A few ideas or facts contain errors or are lacking in helpful details  Demonstrates basic coverage of the topic | Most ideas and facts are accurate and detailed  Demonstrates good coverage of the topic | All facts and ideas are accurate and detailed  Demonstrates thorough coverage of the topic |
| Thinking | No focus  The abstract is in essay intro format. | Poor focus, wanders from topic  The abstract is too vague, does not include results. | Focus sometimes wanders off topic  The abstract covers most parts of report but is missing details | Text stays on topic  The abstract summarizes the paper accurately. | Text is focussed, drives the reader  The abstract summarizes well and is appealing. |
| Application | Many mistakes that should have been caught by editing tools. | Many grade-appropriate mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word use. | Several grade-appropriate mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word use. | Very few mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word use. | No mistakes in spelling, grammar, punctuation, and word use. |
| Communication | Language used inappropriate for this grade and this task. | Language is usually informal; uses terms rarely or poorly | Language is slightly informal; needed more use of terms. | Language used is appropriate, uses scientific terms correctly. | Language used covers all important terms and written with a scientific purpose in mind. |