Hello, and welcome to Writing the Abstract for Your Graduate Capstone Thesis. In this second video we will review how to write a first draft of the abstract for your paper.

Please be sure to download the Video 2 Sample Abstract Handout. You should take a moment or two to read it before continuing. We will be referring to it later in this presentation. Please note: The sample research paper and abstract we are using in this video was created for training purposes only. It does not report on an actual study.

The End of Program Manual states that the body of the abstract is limited to 150-200 words. You might be feeling anxious about that, but don’t worry about it right now. In this video we’ll focus first on how to write the first draft of your abstract. In Part 3 we review how to revise and edit what you have written.

The first thing you should know when writing your abstract is that although the abstract appears first, it is typically the last thing you will write! Only after the thesis or paper has been completed can you decide what information should be in the abstract. For this reason, the abstract is usually written in the past tense because the research is already done.

The second thing to keep in mind is that there are many formats for abstracts. The format we will review in this video is an informative abstract. This kind of abstract retains the scope and content of the larger report but without all the details.

The abstract is a required component of your thesis. You will find the format for the APUS graduate thesis abstract in the End of Program Assessment Manual for Graduate Studies.

Your abstract must contain the following:
- the purpose of the research,
- the methodology used,
- the study’s findings, and
- the conclusions about the research.

These four elements are reviewed in the first video of this series. If you haven’t viewed it, please take a moment to do so before continuing.

Expect to spend some time preparing your abstract. An abstract is an unusually condensed type of writing. And while it may seem difficult to condense a piece of writing that you have spent a long time developing, keep in mind that you are the person who knows the most about your research study. You shouldn’t have to re-read your entire thesis in depth to create your abstract, but you will need to review what you’ve written. In fact, the first three elements of the abstract should seem very familiar to you. The proposal you submitted as part of the Thesis Project contained them as well.
You may find it difficult to summarize your thesis concisely at first. It’s okay to write several paragraphs for your first draft. Later, you will edit it down to a single paragraph. While you might want to use sentences that you wrote for your thesis, try to avoid copying them word for word. Abstracts, as a rule, should be concise and straightforwardly written.

If you’ve never written an abstract before or are not an experienced writer, your first step will be to create an outline. This outline will contain the 4 required components. This will be your worksheet. Title the outline Thesis Abstract.

Label the 1st section Purpose of My Research Study; label the 2nd section My Research Methods Used; label the 3rd My Findings/Results; and then label the final section My Conclusions. These headings won’t actually appear in your finished abstract but will serve as a focus for the next step: writing key sentences that capture the information you need for each section.

A key sentence is one that answers the question implied in each of your 4 sections.

1. What research problem was addressed and why?
2. What method did I use to solve the problem (or answer my research question)?
3. What were my study’s findings? and
4. What were my conclusions?

The best places to find the information for these key sentences will be in the Introduction section of your thesis, in your Research Design section, and in your Findings and Conclusions sections. In Example B on the Video 2 Handout we’ve highlighted the key sentences in GREEN.

Write these sentences in their appropriate sections on your outline. For the moment, don’t worry if your sentences are too long or wordy. You can edit that out later. What you should be focusing on here is making sure all the information you need for the abstract is present in each section.

Now on a new page type these 4 statements:

1. The research problem (or question) of the study was _______________. I investigated this problem because _____________________.
2. The research method(s) I used in my study was/were ______________________.
   If you used a specific theoretical framework for your thesis, you should also mention it here. The statement you should write for that is “The theoretical framework employed in the study was _____________________.
3. The findings of the study are as follows . . .
4. The results of the study indicated (or suggested) the following . . .

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Look at your outline. Pick 1 or 2 sentences to complete each of these 4 statements. Use the ones that seem to best answer the question.

We selected the sentences highlighted in RED in Example C on the Video 2 Handout. As you can see, the 4 required components are present. The next step will be to revise this first draft into an acceptable abstract.

In this video we reviewed

- How to set up an outline for your abstract.
- Where to look for the information, or key sentences, to fill in your outline.
- And how to compose the first draft of the abstract by completing statements that address each of the 4 required abstract elements.

Part 3 of this series, *How to Write a Good Abstract for Your Graduate Capstone Thesis*, will take you through the steps of revising and editing your abstract.