**How To Write An Abstract**

An **abstract** is an abbreviated version of your science fair project’s final report. For most science fairs it is limited to a maximum of 250 words (check the rules for your competition). It appears at the beginning of the research report. (Do not put a copy on your display board. Bring loose copies for the judges during the competition).

Almost all scientists and engineers agree that an abstract should have the following five (5) components:

* **Introduction**. This is where you describe the purpose for doing your science fair project or invention. Why should anyone care about the work you did? Did you explain something that should cause people to change the way they go about their daily business? If you made an invention or developed a new procedure how is it better, faster, or cheaper than what is already out there? **Motivate** the reader to finish reading the abstract or the entire research paper or display board.
* **Problem Statement**. Identify the problem you solved or the hypothesis you investigated.
* **Procedures**. What was your approach for investigating the problem? Summarize the steps. Do not go into detail about materials unless they were critical to your success. Do describe the most important variables if you have time.
* **Results**. What answer/s did you obtain? Be specific and use numbers to describe your results. Do not use vague terms like "most" or "some."
* **Conclusions**. State what your science fair project or invention contributes to the area you worked in. Did you meet your objectives? (For an engineering project state whether you met your design criteria.)

**Things to Avoid**

* Avoid jargon or any technical terms that most readers will not understand.
* Avoid abbreviations or acronyms that are not commonly understood unless you describe what they mean.
* Abstracts do not have a bibliography or citations.
* Abstracts do not contain tables or graphs.
* For most science fairs, the abstract must focus on the previous 12 months' research (or less), and give only minimal reference to any earlier work.
* If you are working with a scientist or mentor, your abstract should only include procedures done by you, and you should not put acknowledgements to anyone else in your abstract.