

The goal of an abstract is to provide your audience with a clear summary of your project, methods, results, and conclusions. Although the rules of abstracts may vary with the discipline for which they are written, the following tips should prove useful regardless of your topic.

1. CHECK REQUIREMENTS AND FIND MODELS

The requirements for an abstract will depend on its final place of publication. Looking at models (if available) can often help you decide on length, tone, and organization. Check the requirements to find out:

- How long the abstract should be.
- How formal the tone should be (If this isn't specified, then you should assume a formal tone. No second person, no contractions, no overly familiar phrases. Generally, it's a good idea to avoid the first person entirely in abstracts. Instead of saying "I show how X," "You will see how X," keep your focus on your research by making it the subject: "This project demonstrates the way that X").
- What sections the abstract should include (If this isn't specified, see #3).

2. CHOOSE YOUR TITLE

- Your title should give readers a clear idea of your project.
- It should be properly capitalized and punctuated (capitalize all words except articles & conjunctions).

3. PLAN YOUR ORGANIZATION

The body of your abstract should do the following:

- Provide the necessary context for your project: Which key terms, figures, information, or theories will your readers need to be able to understand a) what your project attempts to do, and b) why your project is important.
- Explain your methods: How have you created your results? Did you work independently or collaboratively? What methods did you use?
- Summarize your results*: What data, information, or product has come from your project?
- Provide a conclusion*: Why are these results significant? Why should readers or viewers be interested in this project?

*You may occasionally be called upon to write an abstract for a project that is still underway. If so, you might either use this space to explain what you expect to find and why, or explain why your project is interesting/necessary.

4. DRAFT AND PROOFREAD

Abstracts are often submitted online. **It is never a good idea to draft your abstract directly in an online text box.** Grammar and spellcheck are often unreliable or nonexistent. Instead, draft your abstract in a word processor and be sure to run a grammar and spell check.

5. GET ANOTHER SET OF EYES

Remember that the abstract is your first chance to make a good impression. As such it's very important that the abstract be clear and correct.

- Be sure to have a professor read over your abstract to make sure that it accurately represents the project you're describing.
- If possible, have a friend or writing consultant (or someone else unfamiliar with your project) read through your abstract as well. They can tell you if you need to add more context or clarification.

OTHER TIPS TO REMEMBER

Abstracts may include:

- The thesis of the work, usually in the first sentence.
- Background information that places the work in the larger body of literature.
- The same chronological structure as the original work.

How not to write an abstract:

- Do not refer extensively to other works.
- Do not add information not contained in the original work.
- Do not define terms.

(“Other Tips” is adapted from the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center and Philip Koopman, “How to Write an Abstract.”)

MODEL ABSTRACTS (from the 2014 Research & Creative Works Symposium)

Up-Hill Assist Self-Powered Bicycle

Stephan Meyer, Zach Whitlock, Jonathan Kissner, Austin Barber, Physics Department

Sponsor: Dr. Rebecca Edwards

Efficiency and effectiveness are two of the main factors when considering transportation. Perhaps one of the cheapest, most efficient and effective ways to get around (in the city) is by bicycle. The problem, however, is the struggle with up-hill treks while biking. Often times, hills are too steep to climb without struggle and pain. Our idea and incentive is to find a way to create a bike that will assist with up-hill biking, and will require no charging (powered by pedaling). Such a device already exists (complete with smartphone integration), but is priced at roughly \$800. We decided that was a bit exorbitant, and that we could make a much more affordable, more barebones version. In order to accomplish this goal, we looked at a small-scale electric motor. These motors draw energy from a power source and in turn rotate in one direction. But if the motor is turned in the opposite direction, there is power generated from the motor itself. Using this knowledge, we determined that placing an electric motor (for the smaller scale) against the wheel of the bike so that it turns in the opposite direction that it was designed for will generate power when the bike is in forward motion. The electric motor would be fastened to the wheel so the friction between the metal and the motor would turn it. The most important thing that we realized is the fact that the bike wouldn't be electrically powered, but would be electrically assisted. We wanted the motors to be inconspicuous and not too bulky so that the bike still looked aesthetically pleasing. The bike we are creating promotes a healthy lifestyle as well as being a more efficient form of travel that saves money and limits pollution while being affordable.

"New Girl:" A New Masculinity

Danielle Ezzell, Communication Studies Department

Sponsor: Dr. Valerie Renegar

This study examines how the male characters of the Fox situation comedy, "New Girl," work to redefine what is "masculine" by portraying characters that do not completely fit the traditional characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. Traditional hegemonic masculine characteristics are grouped into four categories (No Sissy Stuff, The Big Wheel or The Small Wheel, The Sturdy Oak or the Flimsy Ficus, and Give 'Em Hell), and then the show is analyzed on the basis of whether the traditional hegemonic characteristics are represented or if the characters display characteristics that contradict hegemonic masculinity. The topic of masculinity is an important one within communication and feminist studies because it is a confining, hegemonic social code that dictates how men should act. If men are not considered "masculine" in today's society then they are typically ostracized and/or bullied. This study has proven that, based on the character traits exhibited throughout the first two seasons and the examples provided, the masculinity performed by the male characters in "New Girl" exists somewhere on a spectrum between hegemonic masculinity and femininity, thus they are performing a fluid masculinity. For a critically acclaimed, primetime, situation comedy to depict characters displaying a fluid masculinity, as opposed to hyper-masculinity or effeminacy, is really important because it is setting a standard for the presence of realistic men in the media, thus encouraging men to perform the gender role they are most comfortable with, instead of what is expected, without stigma.

Seeing Devils in the Eyes of Our Enemies: an Analysis of Demonization in American Journalism during World War II

Shelby Morales, History Department

Sponsor: Dr. Melissa Byrnes

My research traces the American perception of Hitler from 1922 to 1945 in *The New York Times* and many magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *The Nation*. Giving special attention to word choice, tone, recurring themes, and emphasis placed by the authors when reporting on Hitler, I was able to capture the essence of the American public opinion. By comparing these primary sources with today's secondary sources it is possible to recognize the demonizing bias that causes these texts to tell different stories. In severe contrast to today, Hitler was not perceived as a diabolical force before or during WWII. Although there were considerable factors that caused dissatisfaction towards him (anti-Semitism, lawlessness, and warmongering), he was not demonized for these reasons. Instead these events resulted in perceptions that he was insane, someone to be feared, comically incompetent, and in some cases justified based on his actions, his past, and his psychological tendencies. There was one significant moment of true demonization during his reign and that occurred in response to the violent political purge of 1934, the Night of the Long Knives. This shows us that during his own time, Hitler was seen more like a Napoleon or a Caesar than an Antichrist and it was only this instance of killing his own supporters that he was

perceived as crossing the line between wrong and evil. It would not be until the reality of the Holocaust set in much later that the demonization that we know it today would come to exist.

Clowning Around

Carmen Gadt

oil on canvas, 2014, 60" x 72"

Nostalgia investigates the relationship between the past and present by interpreting the act of reminiscing about toys, figurines, and other childhood objects. I make large, brightly colored abstract paintings that revive mid-20th century Abstract Expressionism with a contemporary twist. Inspired by Abstract Expressionist artists such as Howard Hodgkin, Hans Hofmann, and Willem de Kooning, and contemporary artists Pia Fries and Cecily Brown, I validate the importance of childhood objects and my personal understanding of nostalgia. Various scholars view nostalgia as oppositional to progress—my paintings redefine nostalgia as a retreat to the past, a layering of present outlooks on life with personal memories. These paintings are founded at the juncture of now and then; a judgment of the past through the eyes of the present. *Nostalgia* invites a longing forged in the dissipation of simplicity as innocence is lost. At the heart of each of these paintings is a prized possession from my childhood that would have been seen by renowned art critic of the 1940s, Clement Greenberg, as “kitsch.” Seeing my belongings in this light causes inner conflict, because it strips away the validity of their importance and individuality. By adding personal insight and hidden complexity, I synthesize abstract expressionist language with common objects and call upon the viewer to reconcile the ironic combinations presented in this series.

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