

Creating an Abstract for an APA Document

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to

- correctly create the abstract page using the page break command in MS Word
- format an abstract according to APA guidelines
- include appropriate elements when writing the content of an abstract based on the type of document for which you are writing the abstract.

The function of an abstract is to give the reader a summary of the contents of the document. Although the abstract should be comprehensive, it should also be brief. The key is to be informative yet concise.

Reference Location(s) in the APA Manual

Refer to the following sections of the APA manual for specific formatting guidelines for abstracts:

Section	Content
1.07 Abstract	Explains the guidelines for formatting the abstract
5.05 Order of the manuscript pages	Lists the order of the sections of a document and states whether each section starts on a new page
5.16 Abstract	Summarizes the requirements for formatting the abstract
Figure 5.1 Sample one-experiment paper	Shows an example of an abstract

Overview of the Formatting Guidelines

Key formatting attributes of an abstract include:

- Starting on page 2 of the document
- No first-line or hanging indent
- Optimal length of 100 to 120 words

The types of documents that require abstracts include research reports, review articles, theory articles, method papers, and case studies. The content of an abstract varies according to the type of document.

Type of Document	Content of Abstract
Research Report	A one- or two-sentence statement describing the research problem The number and key characteristics of participants A summary of experimental methods and data collection procedures A description of key findings The conclusions and implications
Review Article or Theory Article	Topic of the review The purpose and scope of the article The type of sources used in the review Conclusions drawn from the review

Method Paper	<p>The class of method being discussed</p> <p>Key aspects of the method</p> <p>The scope of application of the method</p> <p>The assumptions and limitations of the method</p>
Case Study	<p>The subject of the case study</p> <p>The characteristics of the unit being studied</p> <p>The nature of the problem or phenomenon being illuminated by the case study</p> <p>The questions raised for future research</p>

Examples of Abstracts

Correctly Formatted Abstracts

Below is an example of a correctly formatted abstract.

Adolescent Smoking 2
Abstract
<p>A national sample of 390 junior and senior high school-based centers were mailed an 18-item survey to assess their institutional stages of change regarding smoking cessation education, referral, and prescription nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) services and their perceived barriers and benefits regarding the provision of these services. Nearly half were in the maintenance stage for cessation education programs, one-third were in the maintenance stage for referral services, and 12% were in the maintenance stage for NRT. The most frequently cited perceived benefits included an increased awareness of short- and long-term effects of smoking (education programs and referral services) and increasing student access to cessation methods (NRT).</p>

Incorrectly Formatted Abstracts

Below is an example of an incorrectly formatted abstract.

Missing header

Abstract

Should not be indented

A national sample of 390 junior and senior high school-based centers were mailed an 18-item survey to assess their institutional stages of change regarding smoking cessation education, referral, and prescription **Abbreviation not explained** (NRT) services and their perceived barriers and benefits regarding the provision of these services. Nearly half were in the maintenance stage for cessation education programs, one-third were in the maintenance stage for referral services, and 12% were in the maintenance stage for NRT. The most frequently cited perceived benefits included an increased awareness of short- and long-term effects of smoking (education programs and referral services) and increasing student access to cessation methods (NRT). **More than 120 words**

Common Mistakes Made on the Abstract Page

Listed below are common mistakes made when formatting abstracts.

- Using a first-line indent
- Starting the main body of the document on the same page as the abstract
- Using more than 120 words in the abstract
- Using abbreviations without explaining them

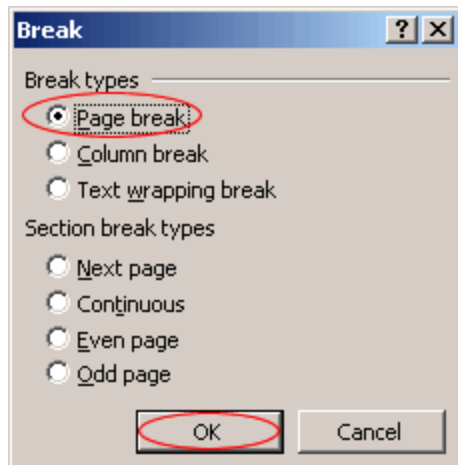
Applying the Guidelines in MS Word

To start the abstract on a new page, you can create a manual page break. To create a manual page break:

1. Position the cursor at the start of the text that you want to place on a new page.
2. Select the *break* command from the *insert* menu.
3. In the *break* dialog box, select *page break*. Then click the *OK*



button to insert the page break.



Once you have finished your abstract you should insert another page break at the end of the document using the same procedures above. This will then set you to begin the first page of main body of the paper.

References

American Psychological Association. (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Price, J. H. & Dake, J. A. (2003). Adolescent smoking cessation services of school-based health centers. *Health Education & Behavior, 30*, 196-208.