

## GG610

### Lecture 3

### Abstracts

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## Make Time

- “I made this so long only because I didn’t have the time to make it shorter.”
- Blaise Pascal, Lettres provinciales, Dec 4, 1656, Number 16
- <http://www.waywordradio.org/discussion/general-discussion/if-id-had-more-time-id-have-written-a-shorter-letter/>



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blaise\\_Pascal\\_2.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Blaise_Pascal_2.jpg)

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## Main Topics


- A Scrutiny of the Abstract II  
K.K. Landes, 1966  
[http://www.aapg.org/bulletin/abstract\\_scrutiny.pdf](http://www.aapg.org/bulletin/abstract_scrutiny.pdf)
- Essential points for an abstract
- Examples of economical writing
- Takeaway points
- References

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## Main Topics

- A Scrutiny of the Abstract II  
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  - Essential points for an abstract
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  - References
- 
- Distill  
the  
essence

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### An Inadequate Abstract

A partial biography of the writer is given. The inadequate abstract is discussed. What should be covered by an abstract is considered. The importance of the abstract is described. Dictionary definitions of "abstract" are quoted. At the conclusion a revised abstract is presented.

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### An Inadequate Abstract

A partial biography of the writer is given. The inadequate abstract is discussed. What should be covered by an abstract is considered. The importance of the abstract is described. Dictionary definitions of "abstract" are quoted. At the conclusion a revised abstract is presented.

### Problems

- Does not present any key findings
- No theme
- Excessive passive voice
- Table of contents with verbs

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

- Most important part of the paper  
(in terms of market reached)
- Leverage

$$\frac{\text{Abstract readers}}{\text{Paper readers}} = \frac{10}{1} \rightarrow \frac{500}{1}$$

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

Prepare final abstract

- after a paper is done
- or
- after the essential work is done

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

Abstract: a summary that concentrates the essential information

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### Original

A partial biography of the writer is given. The inadequate abstract is discussed. What should be covered by an abstract is considered. The importance of the abstract is described. Dictionary definitions of "abstract" are quoted. At the conclusion a revised abstract is presented.

### Revised

The abstract is of utmost importance, for it is read by 10 to 500 times more people than hear or read the entire article. It should not be a mere recital of the subjects covered. Expressions such as "is discussed" and "is described" should never be included! **The abstract should be a condensation and concentration of the essential information in the paper.**



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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### Revised

The abstract is of utmost importance, for it is read by 10 to 500 times more people than hear or read the entire article.

### Action Item

- Provide motivation

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### Revised

The abstract is of utmost importance, for it is read by 10 to 500 times more people than hear or read the entire article. It should not be a mere recital of the subjects covered.

### Action Item

- Provide motivation
  - Set a theme
- An abstract is not a table of contents.

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### Revised

The abstract is of utmost importance, for it is read by 10 to 500 times more people than hear or read the entire article. It should not be a mere recital of the subjects covered. Expressions such as "is discussed" and "is described" should never be included!

### Action Item

- Provide motivation
- Set a theme  
An abstract is not a table of contents.
- Write with punch and be concise

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## Scrutiny of the Abstract II

### Revised

The abstract is of utmost importance, for it is read by 10 to 500 times more people than hear or read the entire article. It should not be a mere recital of the subjects covered. Expressions such as "is discussed" and "is described" should never be included! **The abstract should be a condensation and concentration of the essential information in the paper.**

### Action Item

- Provide motivation
- Set a theme  
An abstract is not a table of contents
- Write with punch and be concise
- Distill the essential findings

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

1 Motivation/Purpose of work

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

1 Motivation/Purpose of work

2 Hypotheses being tested

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

- 1 Motivation/Purpose of work
- 2 Hypotheses being tested
- 3 Critical aspects of approach

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

- 1 Motivation/Purpose of work
- 2 Hypotheses being tested
- 3 Critical aspects of approach
- 4 Critical character of data (if essential)

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

- 1 Motivation/Purpose of work
- 2 Hypotheses being tested
- 3 Critical aspects of approach
- 4 Critical character of data (if any)
- 5 Critical results

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## Essential Points for an Abstract

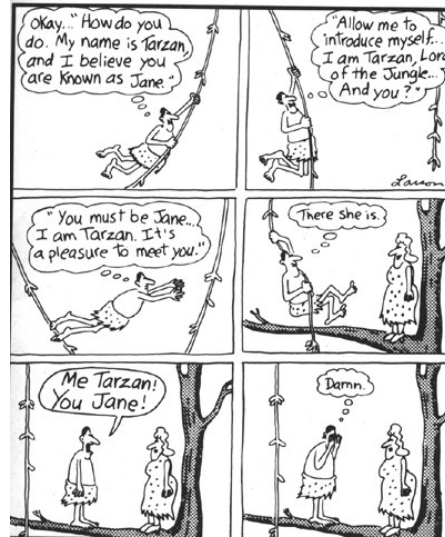
- 1 Motivation/Purpose of work
- 2 Hypotheses being tested
- 3 Critical aspects of approach
- 4 Critical character of data (if any)
- 5 Critical results
- 6 Critical implications

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## Examples of Economical Writing



<http://thesestreets.files.wordpress.com/2008/04/farsidetarzan22.gif>

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- There are two ways we test the hypothesis.

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- There are two ways we test the hypothesis.

### Concise

- We test the hypothesis in two ways.
- **Savings:** 1 word
- What does “there” refer to?

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- Sometimes the exposures are excellent.

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- Sometimes the exposures are excellent.

### Concise

- Excellent exposures occur locally.
- Use “place word”, not “time word”
- **Savings:** 1 words

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- For a number of reasons ...

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- For a number of reasons...

### Concise

- For five reasons...
- “a number of” has absolutely no value
- **Savings:** 2 words

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- We have a very high degree of confidence in the results.

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- We have a very high degree of confidence in the results.

### Concise

- The results are robust.
- Avoid “very”
- **Savings:** 7 words

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- The exposures are magnificent and allow us to study the geology in detail.

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- The exposures are magnificent and allow us to study the geology in detail.

### Concise

- The superb exposures permit detailed analysis.
- Sentence was long
- **Savings:** 7 words

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- It is clear that the facts lead to the following conclusion..

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## Examples of Economical Writing

### Non-concise

- It is clear that the facts lead to the following conclusion..

### Concise

- ~~It is clear that the facts lead to the following conclusion..~~
- **Savings:** 11 words
- What does “it” refer to?

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## Takeaway Points

- Set a theme (and make it good)
- Distill the essence
- Write abstract early and revise
- Extend economical writing to the text!

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## Useful Online References

- [http://www.ees.nmt.edu/outside/Geop/Classes/Geop592/Landes\[1\].pdf](http://www.ees.nmt.edu/outside/Geop/Classes/Geop592/Landes[1].pdf)
- [http://cgiss.boisestate.edu/~billc/Writing/Lowman\\_abstract\\_1988.pdf](http://cgiss.boisestate.edu/~billc/Writing/Lowman_abstract_1988.pdf)<https://www.geology.ucdavis.edu/classes/GELdescriptions/gel190/advice.html>
- <http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html>
- <http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/documents/abstract/>
- <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/handouts-demos/specific-writing-assignments/abstracts>
- <http://www.sfeddit.net/abstract.pdf>