**Research and working with Sources: Writing an Abstract.**

**Introduction**

Abstracts are important because the give a first impression of the work being referenced. They serve the function of ‘selling’ the work, allowing the reader to determine whether they want to continue reading more on the subject, following through with the reference, or deciding whether it is even worth their effort. An abstract is not a review in that it does not evaluate the work but rather provides a concise description. In the humanities, an abstract will often provide the thesis, some background and the conclusion as stated by the author(s) to the work being considered.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR WRITING AN ABSTRACT**

Consider the following steps when preparing an abstract.

**1. What is the motivation, or reason, for writing the abstract?**

What is the importance, and the interest, in the work being examined.   
  
**2. What is the problem that is being addressed?**

What is the main problem that is being solved for the reader? What issue will the work attempt to solve?  
  
**3. What is the approach used to solving the issue?**

Describe the types of evidence or ways used in the research to attempt to solve the problem being addressed.  
  
**4. What are the results of the work?**

Explain what the author(s) found as an answer to their problem. What did they say as their conclusion to their work?  
  
**5. What are the possible implications?**

Are there changes that could be forthcoming as a result of the work? Are the potential changes general in nature or specific to the topic?

**HOW DO I WRITE AN ABSTRACT?**

What do I actually do to write an abstract?

**1. Cite the Source.**

Before anything else on the page, list a full citation of the work.

**2. State the importance of the work.**

Remember why the work was created. Write was is the most important thing, often by stating the thesis of the work in the first sentence.

**3. Use the guidelines to provide other information.**

Refer back to the guidelines listed about to include other relevant information in the abstract.

**4. Keep it Simple**

Do not include references to other authors or subjects. Do not add information not contained in the original work. Do not offer opinions.

**5. Key Terms**

You may wish to add a list of key terms that help a reader quickly reference the topic(s) included in the work.

\**See the ‘Sample Abstracts’ sheet at* [*http://www.pacificslope.ca/skills.html*](http://www.pacificslope.ca/skills.html) *for further reference.*

#### Koopman. Phillip. How to Write an Abstract. Carnegie Mellon University October, 1997. Users.ece.cmu.edu. Retrieved from <http://users.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html>

#### The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (2018). Writingcenter.unc.edu. Retrieved from https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/abstracts/

#### Carroll, Leah, Ph.D. How to Write an Abstract: Tips and Samples (2018). Hsp.berkeley.edu. Retrieved from http://hsp.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/HOW%20TO%20WRITE%20AN%20ABSTRACT.pdf