

Research / Journals/ Journal Articles/ Research Papers



**SELECTING A PAPER FOR CRITICAL
ANALYSIS AND USING AN ABSTRACT**

Learning Objectives



By the end of this lecture you should be able to:

- Describe what a research article and an abstract is.
- Identify the necessary components of a research article and an abstract.
- Distinguish what is a good paper for critical analysis by its abstract.

Research Paper/Journal Article

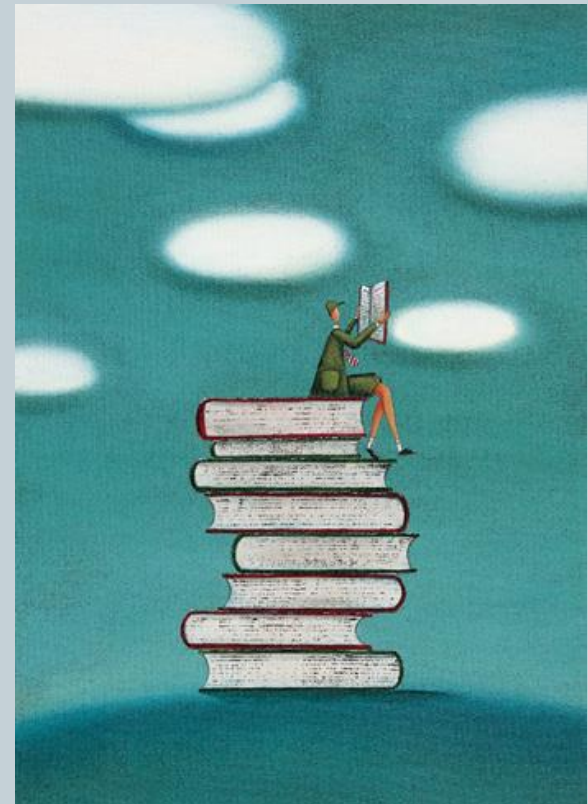


- Published summary of research undertaken in a particular area to find out the best possible information in that area.
- Easily identifiable and distinguishable from magazines, newspapers, reports or abstracts due to arrangement into distinct sections.

Selecting a research article



- ▶ One of the most important tasks in completing a critical review of literature is selecting the right articles.
- ▶ It is essential that you give yourself enough time to read through several articles so you can select appropriate ones that help you meet assignment learning outcomes.



Characteristics of a good article



- It is a research article if:
 - The authors propose to answer a research question at the end of the introduction.
 - The authors include a method section which includes the participants.
 - There is original data collected for the purpose of the study (not just an analysis of data from other studies).
 - The research question is evaluated in light of the data obtained.

Characteristics of a good article



2. It is relatively current.

- Ideally, your article should be no more than 5 -6 years old.

3. It is on a topic that interests you.

- This allows you to use the assessment not only to practice your critical review skills, but to extend your knowledge in a particular area.

4. You understand it.

- Some articles are much more complex than others.
- Select one for which you understand the research question and the methodology used
 - or be prepared to do some extra reading to figure out what it all means.

Research Paper/Journal Article



A research paper should include:

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction (background/review of literature)
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusion
- Discussion
- References

Parts of a research article



- **Title**
 - Provides a brief overview of what the article is about.
- **Abstract**
 - Provides a brief (200 words or less) summary of the research question, the methodology, the results, and interpretation of results.
- **Introduction**
 - Reviews previous literature related to the current study.
 - Poses the research question.

Parts of a research article



- **Method**

- Describes everything about how the research was conducted:

- ✦ Participants and setting(s)
- ✦ Definitions of variables
- ✦ Measurement strategies
- ✦ Analysis strategies
- ✦ Procedure
- ✦ Experimental design

NB: Not all articles will have these specific headings.

Parts of a research article



▶ Results

- Provides a systematic description of the outcomes of the study.
- Often includes figures (e.g. graphs and tables).

▶ Discussion

- Begins with a summary of the purpose of the research and the main outcomes.
- Relates the research study back to preceding literature.
- Identifies particular strengths and weaknesses of the study.
- Proposes questions for future research.

Parts of a research article



- **References**

- Provides a list of all the sources cited in the study.

References

Anonymous. (2002). *Regional identity and behavior*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2005). *Mental health services in Australia 2002-03*. Canberra, ACT: Author.

Brown, A. S. (2003). A review of the déjà vu experience. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(3), 394-413.

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Young, H. F., & Bentall, R. P. (1997a). Probabilistic reasoning in deluded, depressed and normal subjects: Effects of task difficulty and meaningful versus non-meaningful material. *Psychological Medicine*, 27(2), 455-465.

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Abstracts

What is an Abstract?

An Abstract of a research paper should:

- ▶ Describe the objective, methods, results and conclusions of the research project.
- ▶ Involves summarising the essence of a whole paper into a single paragraph that conveys as much new information as possible.

What is an Abstract?

- ▶ Has to be a brief, non-repetitive style
- ▶ Published in isolation from the main text.
- ▶ A reference tool, enabling the reader to decide whether or not to read the full text.

Purpose of an Abstract



- Allows reader who may be interested in longer work to decide if it is worth reading the full text or report.
- Abstracts should contain key words and phrases to enable easy searching.

Purpose of an Abstract



- Key words emphasise central topics, enabling prospective readers to make an informed judgement on the applicability of the work.
- Reading the abstract often enables the reader to determine if the work is primary or secondary research.

Writing an Abstract



The style of an Abstract should be:

- **Concise**
- **Clear**

Writing an Abstract



- ▶ An Abstract appears as the first section of a paper, but it should be written last.
- ▶ All sections of the research project need to have completed before selecting and summarizing the essential information from those sections.

Different Types of Abstract



- Descriptive
- Informative
- (see handout for details of differences)

Reading Abstracts



Does the abstract:

- Clearly describe a research project or study?
- Talk about the methods used to undertake the research?
- Discuss the findings or results?



- Writingcenter.unc.edu. (2018). *Cite a Website - Cite This For Me*. [online] Available at: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/abstracts/> [Accessed 1 Feb. 2018].