

## How to Read an Abstract

Scientists research specific topics to gain more knowledge. One way scientists communicate their findings is through publishing scientific papers, also known as research papers or primary articles. In their publication, scientists must include an abstract, introduction, method, results and discussion. An abstract of the paper is a short summary of the entire publication. It's like the summary of a book on the back cover, but the abstract is placed at the beginning of the paper. The organization of the abstract is similar to the organization of the paper. When you read the abstract, look for the following in order:

1. **Introduction:** describes the background of the topic and addresses the question the research aims to answer
2. **Methods:** explains how the research was conducted. Here, there are often technical terms for methods used that are likely common to the field.
3. **Results:** reports the data that address the question
4. **Discussion:** contains the main conclusions the authors want to draw from the data. It can include interpretations and the greater significance of the research to the broader field, possibly the public.

Don't panic if the abstract seems confusing! You may have to read it several times. You may want to approach it by the following steps:

1. **Skimming:** Read the abstract briefly to try to understand the general concept, but not all the details.
2. **Vocabulary:** Reread and underline words or phrases that don't make sense. Look up key words and phrases using an online scientific source, but know that you don't need to understand every single word! Try to understand phrases in the context of the abstract.
3. **Comprehension:** Now read again carefully for comprehension.

### TOOLKIT CREDITS:

Developed by Angela Gee, (Los Angeles Trade Tech Community College, CA) and Martin Diaz,( Los Angeles Trade Tech Community College , CA) with support by the rest of the C-DEBI Collaborative Toolkit Team.

### WEBSITE:

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