

Grant Writing Worksheet

Help for writing an abstract.

Typically, the summary or abstract serves several functions. It describes who you are, the scope of the project, and its projected costs, allowing you to communicate the central message of your proposal right away, so that reviewers know immediately and precisely what the purpose of the proposed project is. It allows you to communicate enthusiasm for and commitment to the proposed project.

In order to be useful to those reviewing the grant proposal, the summary or abstract should generally include the following information:

- a brief introduction to your organization
- an overview of the proposed project
- a discussion about the contribution the project makes to the field

Many experts say that this element is the most important part of the grant proposal, because examiners will read this section first, using it to determine whether the proposal is worth further examination and consideration.

Some reviewers, in fact, will read only this section of the proposal, or it may be circulated among key officials examining your grant proposal. The document may continue to be used after a project is funded, to inform other officials who are to be involved in the project, or within the funding organization. Furthermore, you may want to use this document within your organization, in order to elicit support for the project.

Above all, experienced grant writers emphasize that the summary or abstract must be written concisely in clear, direct, and specific language. Readers need to be able to discern the key point efficiently without being bogged down in unnecessary or distracting details. In other words, **each sentence should say something specific and worth knowing**

Grant specialists David C. Morrison and Stephen W. Russell suggest the following planning and writing strategies for the proposal summary or abstract:

- Write the section after the rest of the proposal has been written, so that you can draw upon the clearly laid out elements of the proposal.
- While drafting, take pertinent information from the completed proposal verbatim. Later, edit to make information fit the space allowed.

Generally, the summary/abstract section of the grant proposal will be between 250 and 500 words long, rarely exceeding a page.

Types of Abstracts

In technical writing, including proposal writing, there are two basic types of abstracts which may be used: **Descriptive** and **Summary**. Most research proposals ask for a Summary abstract, while many journals require a Descriptive one.