

# PROJECT PROPOSAL WRITING

## Abstract and Executive Summary

### Preamble

The abstract is a clear, concise statement that provides the reader with an overview of the project. There may be a word or space limitation to the abstract section of the proposal. The abstract provides an opportunity for the writer to hook the reader's interest in the project. The abstract must sell the grant. If the reader does not get interested by the first page then the proposal is lost.

### Learning Objectives

1. To understand the definitions of abstract and executive summary.
2. To differentiate between an abstract and executive summary.
3. To know what abstract and executive summary should contain.

### Learning Outcome

1. The student is expected to have an understanding of the terms abstract and executive summary in a proposal.
2. By the end of this topic, the student should be able to differentiate between an abstract and executive summary.

The purpose of the Project Summary/Abstract is to describe succinctly every major aspect of the proposed project. It should contain a statement of objectives and methods to be employed. Members of the Study Section who are not primary reviewers may rely heavily on the abstract to understand your application. Consider the significance and

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innovation of the research proposed when preparing the Project Summary. The Project Summary must be no longer than 30 lines of text.

## **The Abstract Should Include:**

- A brief background of the project
- Specific aims, objectives, or hypotheses
- The significance of the proposed research and relevance to topic, the unique features and innovation of the project the methodology (action steps) to be used
- Expected results and description of how your results will affect other research areas

## **Further Suggestions**

- Be complete, but brief
- Use all the space allotted
- Avoid describing past accomplishment and the use of the first person
- Write the abstract last so that it reflects the entire application.

Remember that the abstract will be used for purposes other than the review, such as to provide a brief description of the grant in annual reports, presentations, and dissemination to the public.

ALWAYS write this section LAST, even though it goes first. You would not believe how much plan can change by the time you are through writing a grant! The abstract or executive summary section should be a one-page miniature version of your proposal, and tells the person who is soiling the giants for review everything they need to know. It tends to answer the following questions. WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, WHEN, HOW MUCH = Organization/Personnel, Facility.

## **Difference between Abstract and Executive Summary**

The abstract or executive summary is positioned at the beginning of a full document. Traditionally the abstract can consist of technical language while the executive summary contains non-technical language. Generally written after the rest of the report, the

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abstract states the subject matter in a nutshell, noting the problem or purpose of the report, methods of investigation used, results and recommendations.

More than a synopsis, an executive summary espouses the value and unique selling points of a business proposal. It is usually a one-page statement that serves as a condensed version or representation of a business report, sales proposal or managerial portfolio. It introduces the problem or goal of the report, substantiates conclusions/solutions and offers recommendations in addition to contextual benefits for potential customers.

Abstract and Executive Summary are two terms that are to be understood with difference. Abstract is a term used in the writing of research papers. On the other hand executive summary is a term used in business for a short document that summarizes a longer report. This is the main difference between abstract and executive summary. An abstract is written with the purpose of letting the readers understand the gist of the research paper to be presented during a seminar or a conference. It is a short form of the entire research paper. In other words it contains the subject matter of the research paper in a nutshell.

An abstract is written for orientation whereas an executive summary is written as a form of condensed version. This is one of the main differences between an abstract and an executive summary. It is indeed possible that different businesses define executive summary differently as according to the nature of their business models. An executive summary should be written in non-technical language whereas an abstract can be written in technical language. An executive summary should have conclusion at the end. An executive summary should attempt at making a recommendation at the end. An executive summary should summarize more than one document.

- An executive summary should contain short and concise paragraphs. At the same time an abstract also can contain short and concise paragraphs.
- At times it contains only one paragraph too

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## Differences between an Abstract and an Executive Summary

	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>Executive Summary</b>
Nature	Abbreviated summary.	Unique selling point
Audience	Specialized (researchers) or mere readers.	Decision makers, e.g. corporate managers.
Scope	Informational, academic, administrative, and other general documents (thesis, articles and patents).	Solicited or unsolicited sales proposals and bids (P&B).
Purpose	Written with the purpose of letting the readers understand the gist of the research paper to be presented during a seminar or a conference. It is a short form of the entire research paper	Call for action. Persuade readers to buy on the recommended solution addressing the problem, namely, make your unique selling point (USP).
Content	Mainly technical Present the problem and scope, Expose the used methodology Report observations and results Draw conclusions and recommendations	Mainly managerial (The 4 rules of persuasion): State outcomes and benefits; Substantiate benefits with proofs of concept: • Apply benefits to the readers particular; context (win themes): Recommend a solution to address the problem.
Length	Short Shorter than the executive summary	Short. Longer than the abstract.
Style	Technical, static, and more academic	Managerial, dynamic, and more enthusiastic.

### Below is a Typical Breakdown

Cover Letter: Written specifically to the appropriate contact person at the foundation.	1 page
Abstract (also known as executive summary): Describes concisely the information that will follow.	Around 250 pages 2 paragraphs

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Introduction: Helps to establish your credibility as a grant applicant.	1 page
Statement of Need: Describes a problem and explains why you require a grant to address the issue.	
Objectives: Refine your idea and tell exactly what you expect to accomplish in response to the need.	1 page
Methods: What you will do to accomplish your objectives within a stated time frame.	1 page
Evaluation: Measures your results and effectiveness. This should correspond to your objectives.	1 paragraph
Future Funding: Details feasible plans to sustain your project. This I paragraph applies only if the project will run indefinitely. .	1 page
Budget: Itemized list of income and expenses that shows precisely how 1 page much money you will need and how you will spend it to accomplish your objectives;	

## Reflective Question

Describe the difference between an abstract and executive summary

## Reference

Hines, A.H. 2003. Ecology of Juvenile and Adult Blue Crabs: Summary of Discussion of Research Themes and Directions. *Bulletin of Marine Science*: 72(2): 423-433.