**What is an abstract?**

An abstract is a concise summary of a completed research project, paper, or essay. A well-written abstract will make the reader want to learn more about your research and attend your presentation. Abstracts also serve as a summary of the research so the paper can be categorised and searched by subject and keywords.

**How long is an abstract?**

Generally, abstracts are limited to 200 to 300 words, but the exact word limit will be stated by the publication, conference, or organisation requesting the abstract.

**There is no single format for writing a successful abstract!**

Your paper might be:

1. An exploration – something you are currently working on (“In this paper, I will explore X…”).
2. An argument, relating to something you have already written. It may be an excerpt from an essay or dissertation.
3. A piece of creative writing, produced either for the showcase or that you have already written. You may wish to read out the entire piece, or a selected section (depending on its length).

**Tips for writing an abstract**

1. Start strong. Your first sentence should be clear and attention-grabbing.
2. Find the main point of your paper or research and phrase it in a way that can be understood by an educated non-expert.
3. Remember to use keywords important to your field of research or to use words that indicate your field (literary linguistics, creative writing, English literature).
4. Remember, it’s a summary – so use short quotations (if you feel they are necessary) and avoid footnotes if possible.
5. Make sure you proof-read your work, to avoid spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.

**Further information can be found here:**

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/abstractsandappendices.pdf](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/studentservices/documents/abstractsandappendices.pdf)