



## Writing an abstract

Students write an abstract for the article completed in 'Writing a scientific review article'. It is recommended that this activity is carried out after the students have completed their final draft of the article.

### Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- identify the key features of an abstract
- write an abstract for their own article.

### Time required

30 minutes class time + homework (or could be done entirely in class, or for homework)

### Outline of the activity

In the first part of the activity, students look at an abstract for a review article. They are expected to identify the key features of the abstract. Issue briefing sheet 1 and give them 5-10 minutes to complete the task.

Discuss the findings with the whole class, and get students to share their thoughts on the key features of the abstract. The slide presentation could be used to go through the key features (this also outlines the differences between abstracts for research papers and reviews).

Students write an outline plan for their abstract. This could take the form of a flow diagram or a list of bullet points. This should take 5-10 minutes. The writing of the abstract could be done in class or for homework.

Instruct the students to insert their final abstract below the author's name and above the introduction to their article.

### Tips and strategies



A range of articles which could provide additional abstracts are available at:

<http://www.rsc.org/Publishing/Journals/CS/Index.asp>

Students should plan and write their abstract with reference to their own article, rather than trying to do it off the top of their head. If you are doing the whole activity in class, make sure that the students have a copy of their article to hand.



## Writing an abstract: briefing sheet

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During this activity, you will write an abstract for the article you wrote in 'Writing a scientific review article'. This worksheet gives you the opportunity to read an abstract and identify its key features.

A research paper focuses on the use of specific techniques and methodologies to answer a question posed by the researcher. The abstract will make mention of the question, the methodologies and the results/conclusions.

A review paper draws together research from a large number of research papers or other sources. As such, the abstract will centre on the themes of the review and the conclusions drawn.

Note that the abstract below has been written for a review article, rather than a scientific research paper. A review is a scientific paper that draws together the findings of a range of researchers who have published their work in various different publications. The article you wrote about stem cells is effectively a review, so your abstract may bear some resemblance to that shown below.

Abstract: Quorum sensing (QS) has traditionally referred to a mechanism of communication within a species of bacteria. However, emerging research implicates QS in interspecies communication and competition, and such systems have been proposed in a wide variety of bacteria. This activity of bacterial QS also extends to relationships between bacteria and eukaryotes and host–pathogen interactions in both clinical and agricultural settings are of particular interest. These relationships are particularly pertinent in light of the rising prevalence of antibiotic resistant bacteria. In this tutorial review we describe bacterial QS and its capacity in interspecies and interkingdom interactions, as well as the corresponding eukaryotic responses.

After reading the above text, you should write down your ideas about the key features of the abstract. You may choose to do this as bullet points, or as a flow diagram.

You should now write the abstract for your article following these ideas.