

Writing an Abstract

An **abstract** is a short, non-evaluative, information-dense summary of the contents and purpose of a paper. This summary must be able to stand alone as it may be the only part of the work a reader sees. You may be asked to write an abstract as part of your assignment. Although your abstract is placed in the first section of your assignment, it is best written last.

1. Format
2. Read an example
3. Follow the steps

NOTE: Citation style
APA 7th Edition. Modify
for other citation styles.

1. Format

- Place the abstract on its own page immediately after the title page and before your paper
- Use the heading **Abstract** – centred, top of the page, **title case**¹
- Write a SINGLE paragraph
- Left align with no indent
- Double space your text
- Write less than 250 words; length depends on the length of the work that follows (no more than 10% of the total word count of the work)
- Use a clear, direct writing style that employs short sentences and key words and phrases that quickly identify the content and focus of the work.

2. Read an example

Abstract

This study examined the opinions of influential, authoritative employees from the education and legal systems, regarding their perceptions of the role of the law and cyberbullying in Australian schools. Participants were asked whether they thought a specific law for cyberbullying should be introduced, what particular behaviours, if any, should be criminalised and who should be involved. Participants were located across three Australian States. Thematic analysis was used to identify eight main themes within the data, namely (1) uses of the law in general, (2) introduction of a law for cyberbullying, (3) benefits and difficulties of criminalising cyberbullying for young people, (4) conditions for a cyberbullying law for young people, (5) who should be involved in a cyberbullying law, (6) legal sanctions thought to be appropriate, (7) educational and legal solutions and (8) educational interventions for student cyberbullying. Implications include increasing the awareness of how existing legislative responses can be used as deterrents, when working towards more effective cooperation of education and legal systems.

Acknowledgement of sample abstract (not required as you are the writer)

Young, H., Campbell, M., Spears, B., Butler, D., Cross, D., & Slee, P. (2016). Cyberbullying and the role of the law in Australian schools. *Australian Council for Education Research*, 60(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944115627557>

¹ **Title case**

Capitalising the first word, the first word after a colon, and all MAJOR WORDS. Use lower case for words of less than three letters EXCEPT after a colon. Use title case for titles of journals, magazines, and newspapers.

3. Follow the steps

Analysis of example

Centred, top of the page,
bold title case

Abstract

1. State the problem

This study examined the opinions of influential, authoritative employees from the education and legal systems, regarding their perceptions of the role of the law and cyberbullying in Australian schools.

2. Say why it is under investigation

Participants were asked whether they thought a specific law for cyberbullying should be introduced, what particular behaviours, if any, should be criminalised and who should be involved

3. Describe participants and their characteristics

Participants were located across three Australian States.

4. Give a brief overview of what was done

Thematic analysis was used to identify eight main themes within the data, namely (1) uses of the law in general, (2) introduction of a law for cyberbullying, (3) benefits and difficulties of criminalising cyberbullying for young people, (4) conditions for a cyberbullying law for young people, (5) who should be involved in a cyberbullying law, (6) legal sanctions thought to be appropriate, (7) educational and legal solutions and (8) educational interventions for student cyberbullying.

5. Discuss the main result/findings and consider what the result indicates

Implications include increasing the awareness of how existing legislative responses can be used as deterrents, when working towards more effective cooperation of education and legal systems.