



What is an abstract?

- An abstract is a summary of your research.
- It comes directly after a cover page.
- Winstanley (2009) suggests not exceeding 250 words.
- It includes 3 key aspects: **topic**, **methods** and **findings**.

Aspects to include within an abstract:

Topic	Function	Questions
	Introduce your topic. Explain its importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the topic of research?• What are the key aims/ research questions?• Why is this subject significant?
Methods	Function	Questions
	Show approach to the topic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How was the research approached?• What methods were used?• What key theories or practitioners were used?
Findings	Function	Questions
	Summarise the findings. Consider the implications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What results or conclusions were found?• What impact might this have?



Example Abstract

The abstract below shows the three areas (topic, methods and findings) highlighted.

This report addresses and analyses the use of compositional techniques and media within figurative painting and photography. Looking at both contemporary and historical examples, the paper explores how artists utilise theatrical and anti-theatrical measures to try and capture a sense of reality and engage the viewer beyond the pictorial plane, focusing mainly on the 18th century concept of the tableau and the later Brechtian concept of 'breaking the fourth wall'. Putting this into the context of Lacan's (1979) theories of the gaze, it will question the relationship between subject and beholder and whether the artist's, subject's and beholder's gender influences the way a picture is perceived. The report revolves around four key pieces, two contemporary and two historical: Gustave Courbet's (1851) *A Burial at Ornans*, Jeff Wall's *Tattoos and Shadows* (2002), Caroline Walker's (2010) *Conservation* and Edouard Manet's (1882) *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*; as well as the author's own informed practice. The report suggests that, while there is concern for the longevity of figurative, 2-dimensional, image based art, historical techniques can still be utilised efficiently and inform new outcomes that set out to challenge the nature of beholding and representation.

Topic	Methods	Findings
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Example phrases to use in abstracts:

- This report discusses/covers ...
- It questions whether ...
- This area is significant as ...
- One of the key theories utilised is ...
- The main practitioners considered are ...
- Examples will feature from ...
- Primary research was conducted by ...
- The report concludes that ...
- The results suggest that ...

Reference List

Winstanley, C. (2009) *Writing dissertations for dummies*. London: John Wiley and Sons.