

Q. Why should a journal article have an abstract and/or keywords?

Abstracts and/or keywords could increase an article's discoverability and may increase the likelihood that an article will be read and cited.

In other words, because of the way that most academic search engines work, articles with abstracts and keywords may appear higher in search results than articles that lack these elements. Users, in turn, are more likely to select and use an article that appears near the top of the search results than they are to choose an article that appears on the second, third, or fourth page of the results.

For more detailed information about how academic search engines work, see:

"What is Metadata?" from the University of Toronto Press Journals Blog. <http://blog.utpjournals.com/2015/01/27/what-is-metadata/>

Jöran Beel. and Bela Gipp. and Erik Eilde. "Academic Search Engine Optimization (ASEO): Optimizing Scholarly Literature for Google Scholar & Co." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 41.2 (2010): 176-190. *Project MUSE*. Web. 1 Apr. 2015. <<https://muse.jhu.edu/>>. <http://muse.jhu.edu/article/369308>

Q. Can Project MUSE just use the first paragraph or two of the article as the abstract?

No. An effective abstract includes a succinct "blueprint" of the article, including a discussion of the argument, its significance, the methodology, and the findings. The first paragraphs of most articles do not include this information.

Q. How do I write an abstract for an article?

Abstracts fall into two general types: the descriptive and the informative.

Descriptive abstracts are generally 100 to 120 words long and simply describe the topic of the article. This type of abstract does not include a discussion of the importance of the research, of how the research fits into the field as a whole, or of the findings or conclusion of the research.

Informative abstracts can be 250 words or longer and summarize the entire article. This type of abstract not only describes the central argument of the article, but it also discusses the author's methodology and findings and explains the significance of the research within a given field.

Informative abstracts are more common than descriptive ones. The length and format of an informative abstract varies depending on discipline. However, all effective informative abstracts contain the following:

- A synopsis of the article's central topic, problem, or question in no more than two sentences
- A brief explanation of the research's significance to the author's discipline
- An overview of the author's argument, findings, and conclusions
- A short discussion of the implications of this work for the author's field of study
- All of the keywords identified in the keywords list

Abstracts should not include:

- Any information that is not in the body of the text
- Any extraneous details or language

For further information and tips about writing effective abstracts, see:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/752/04/>

<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/abstract>

<http://www.editage.com/insights/how-to-write-an-effective-title-and-abstract-and-choose-appropriate-keywords>

Q. How do I choose keywords for an article?

As you assemble a list of keywords for an article, keep in mind the purpose of the list: to steer interested researchers towards your article in the hope that they will download it and cite it. The goal is not to make your article pop up in the broadest range of searches. Instead, the goal is for your article to appear high on the list of search results conducted by researchers who are looking for articles similar to yours.

For this reason, a good list of keywords is short and targeted rather than broad and scattershot. Yet, this short, targeted list of keywords must also comprehensively capture all of the important topics of your article.

That's a tall order, but generating a list like that is not as difficult as it sounds, if you follow a few easy steps:

1. Start by listing the most frequently used words or phrases in your article and then go through the list carefully to make sure that you have not missed any important concepts.
2. Add common synonyms for the words and phrases on your preliminary list and make sure to include common acronyms (if any) for the phrases. (For example, include both World Trade Organization and WTO.)
3. Search for your keywords in Google Scholar, your library's site, and/or any other search engine that is routinely used in your field.
4. Evaluate the results of these searches, asking yourself if your article fits with the articles returned and if the pool of results for those keywords seems too narrow or too broad.

5. Tweak your list of keywords and phrases until you are satisfied with the search results that they generate.
6. Make sure that each of these keywords and phrases appears in the article's abstract at least once and, if possible, in the article's title.

Q. The print version of my journal does not include abstracts and/or keywords. Can I include them in the digital version on Project MUSE?

Yes, abstracts and keywords that are not included in the article PDFs can be submitted using this template.

If you have any questions, please contact your assigned Production Coordinator either directly or at museProduction@press.jhu.edu

Q. Can the abstracts and/or keywords for an article's digital version on Project MUSE be different from the ones in the print version?

Yes, abstracts and/or lists of keywords in the Project MUSE version of an article can be different from the print version. For example, a digital version's abstract can be longer than the one found in the print version. Similarly, keywords and abstracts can even be translated into different languages than those that appear in the print version. (You will need to supply the translations in these cases.)

If you have any questions or would like to take advantage of this feature, please contact your assigned Production Coordinator either directly or at museProduction@press.jhu.edu.

Q. How should I submit abstracts and/or keywords for the articles in my upcoming issue?

If the abstracts and/or keywords are in the article PDF, just submit the article files as you normally do. We will take care of the rest.

If the abstracts and/or keywords are not in the article PDFs, submit them using this [template](#).

Q. Can I add abstracts and/or keywords to articles in issues that are already on the Project MUSE site?

We are researching ways to allow for addition abstracts and/or keywords to existing articles. Please send an email to museProduction@press.jhu.edu to let us know that you are interested so that we can make sure that you are notified directly as soon as the tool is available.