

ABSTRACT VS. INTRODUCTION

When writing a paper, some instructors may ask for an abstract as well as an introduction. Understanding the differences can help you know how to write both sections.

This guide draws information from the APA (7th ed.) and Turabian (9th ed.) Manuals.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE TWO SECTIONS

1. Appear at or near the beginning of a paper.
2. Introduce information about the paper.
3. Provide the organization of the paper (to some extent).

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO SECTIONS

	Abstract ¹	Introduction ²
When to Use It	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Most often appears in APA format● Longer, more formal academic papers, including the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Term papers, Research reviews, & Dissertations● As assigned by your professor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Most or all academic papers
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● After the title page● On a separate page● Before the introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Not on a separate page. Instead, it is the first section of the paper content
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Summarize the following elements:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Topic (problem under investigation)○ Essential features of the study method (research design, data-gathering procedures, sample size)○ Expectations, General findings, Main results○ Limitations of study and implications for theory, policy, and/or practice○ Include a list of keywords/phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Hook (grab reader's attention)● Give context about the topic● Define key terms (if needed)● Thesis statement or argument
Word Count	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 150-250 words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Concise; no specific word count

PRACTICE NOW

¹ American Psychological Association, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2020). Sec. 2.9.

² American Psychological Association, Sec. 2.11; Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*, 9th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018). Sec. 10.1.