



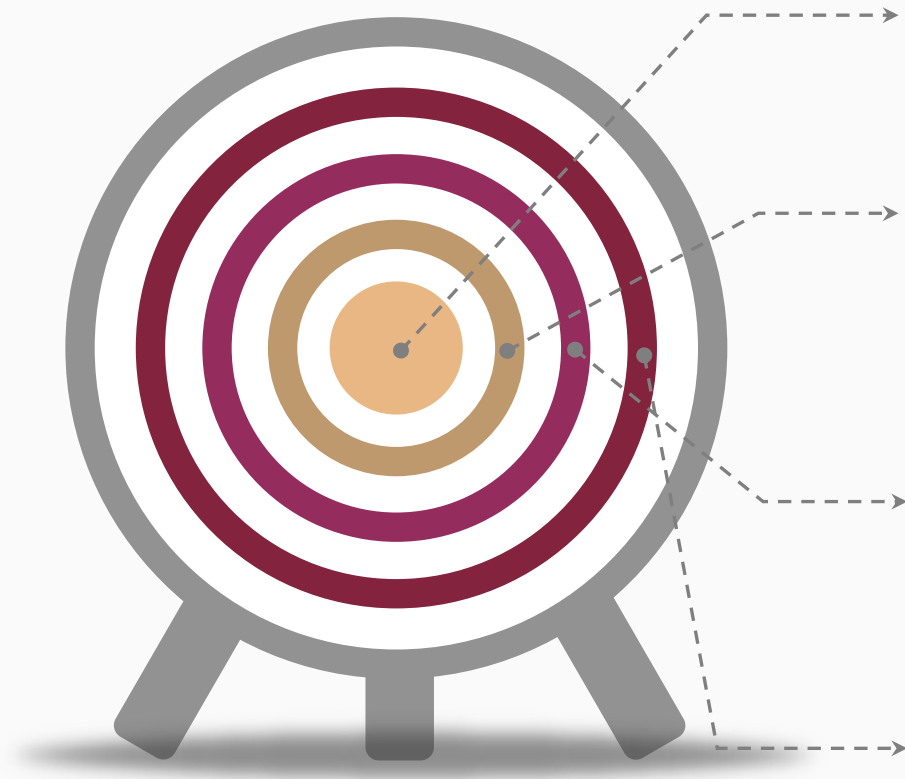
UTM
UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

HOW TO WRITE A THESIS ABSTRACT

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Course Content



Definition and Nature of an Abstract

Format and Guidelines to Writing an Abstract

Important Points to Consider when Writing an Abstract

Samples of UTM Thesis Abstract

ABSTRACT

The last thing you write but the
first thing people read!

Why Write an Abstract?

Important for both **selection** and **indexing** purposes

Selection

Allow interested readers to quickly decide whether it is **relevant** to their purpose and whether they need to **read** the whole paper.

Indexing

Most academic journal databases enable users to search for abstracts – allows **quick retrieval** by users. Abstracts **MUST** include **key terms** that potential researcher would use to search.

When to Write an Abstract?

Submission of articles to journals



Application for research grants



Completion and submission of thesis



Submission of proposals for conference papers



Abstract Defined

Important component of your thesis

The first significant description of your work read by anyone.

A small version of your entire thesis

Presents all major elements of your work in a condensed form.

Report on original contributions of your research, avoid discussion of others' work

ABSTRACT

A stand-alone text

Needs to be less than 5% of the thesis.

It is the essence of the whole thesis.

Capable of substituting the whole thesis

It is a comprehensive summary of the thesis.

Abstract – General Format

Size and Structure

Size

UTM Thesis requirement:

- The abstract should be written in one paragraph and not exceed one (1) page.
- The abstract can be written using single or 1.5 spacing.
- Maximum of 350 words.
- Between 8 – 12 sentences.

Structure

- The structure should mirror the structure of the whole thesis,
- Should represent all its major elements.
- If your thesis has five chapters, there should be one or more sentences assigned to summarise each chapter.

UTM Thesis Guidelines – Abstract Writing

The abstract should include the following:

- The abstract has to start with a **brief theme sentence** to orientate the reader about the overall issue addressed in the thesis.
- The abstract should indicate the **aim or purpose of the research**
- The **academic and/or practical importance of the study** should be explained
- The **methodology** used in the study should also be briefly described
- The **main findings of the study** should be summarised
- A **statement of conclusion** should indicate the contribution made by the study on filling gaps in the literature

Source: https://sps.utm.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Thesis-manual-26.5.2020_full.pdf

UTM Thesis Guidelines – Abstract Writing (cont.)

- The **practical or managerial implications of the study's findings** should be highlighted where appropriate.
- Abstract must be **bilingual**. For a thesis written in Malay language, the abstract must first be written in **Malay** language and followed by the **English** translation.
- If the thesis is written in English, the abstract must be written in English and followed by the translation in Malay language.
- The abstract should be written in **one paragraph** and **not exceed one (1) page**.
- The abstract can be written using **single or 1.5 spacing**.

Source: https://sps.utm.my/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Thesis-manual-26.5.2020_full.pdf

What to Include in an Abstract?

The format depends on the discipline you are working on. However, all abstracts generally include the following sections.

1

Research aim

- What is the importance of the research?
- Why would any reader be interested in the larger work?

2

Problem

- What problem does this work attempt to solve?
- What is the scope of the study?
- What is the main argument, thesis or claim?

3

Methodology

- Abstract that is based on scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study
- Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research.

4

Results

- An abstract that is based on scientific work may include specific data to indicate results of the study
- Other abstracts may discuss findings in a more general way

5

Implications

- How does the work adds to the body of knowledge on the topic?
- Are there any practical, theoretical, pedagogical applications from the findings or implications for future research?

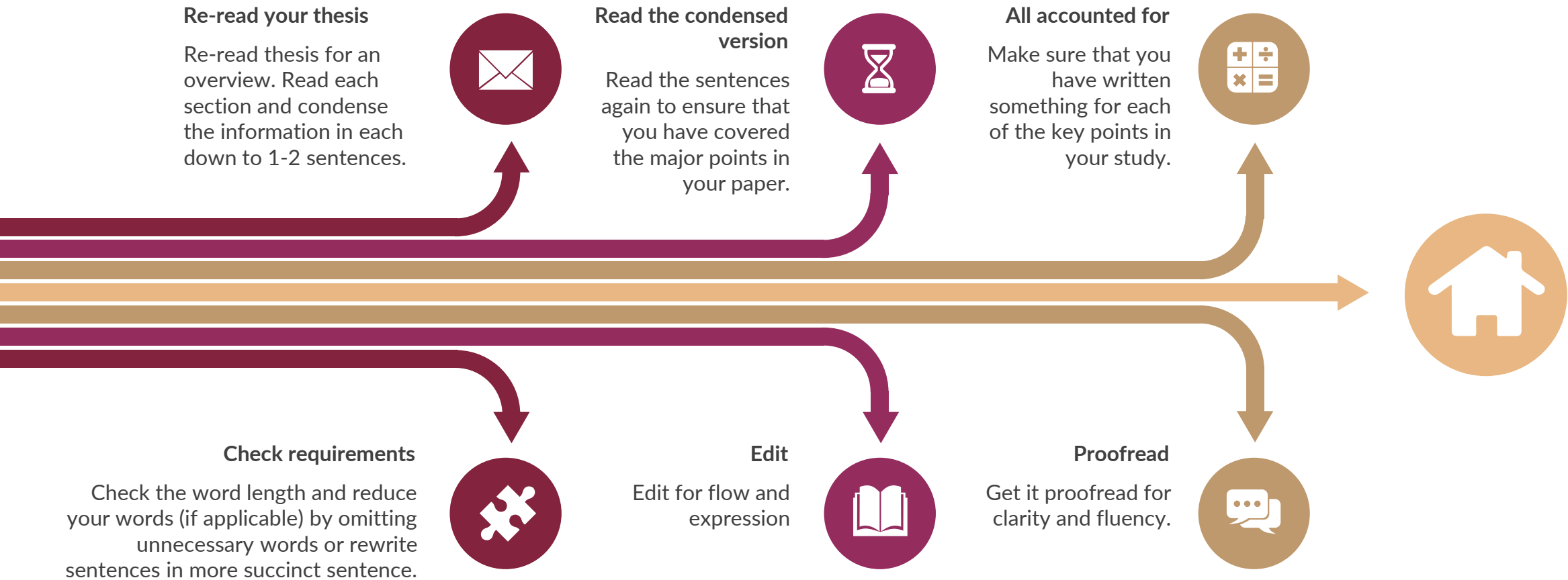
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DISCLAIMER:

The importance given to different components can vary between disciplines.

Solution: Try to look at abstracts that are similar to your work as models.

How do I Write an Abstract?



Aims

What practical/theoretical problem does the research respond to, what RQ did you aim to answer? State the research objectives / aims.

Tenses used: Present / past tense but NOT in future tense – research is complete.

Methods

Mention the research methods used to answer the RQ. Should be direct description of what you did in 1-2 sentences.

Tenses used: Past tense – refer to completed action.

Results

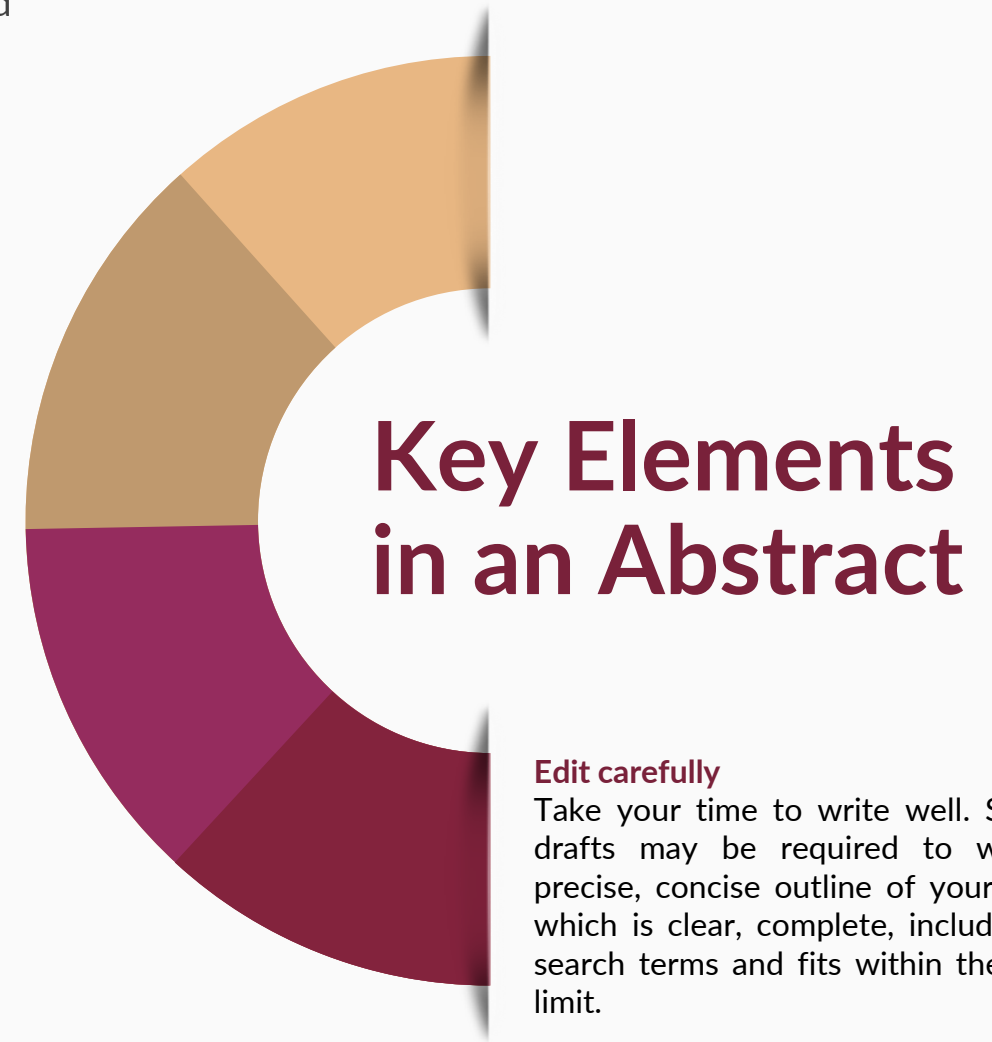
Summarise the main research results. You may not be able to include all results here. Highlight only the important findings that will allow readers to understand your conclusions.

Tenses used: present / past simple tense.

Conclusions

Provide main conclusions of your research: what is your answer to the problem or your RQ? Readers should finish with a clear understanding of the central point of that your research has proved or argued. It might include recommendations for implementation (for studies related to solving a practical problem). If relevant, you can briefly make suggestions for future research.

Tenses used: present simple tense.



Edit carefully

Take your time to write well. Several drafts may be required to write a precise, concise outline of your paper which is clear, complete, includes key search terms and fits within the word limit.

What Makes a Good Abstract?



Sample Abstract (taken from UTM Thesis Guidelines, 2018: 60)

Abstract 1	Key Parts
<p>The purpose of this study is to investigate the application of genetic algorithm (GA) in modelling linear and non-linear dynamic systems and develop an alternative model structure selection algorithm based on GA. Orthogonal least square (OLS), a gradient descent method was used as the benchmark for the proposed algorithm. A model structure selection based on modified genetic algorithm (MGA) has been proposed in this study to reduce problems of premature convergence in simple GA (SGA). The effect of different combinations of MGA operators on the performance of the developed model was studied and the effectiveness and shortcomings of MGA were highlighted. Results were compared between SGA, MGA and benchmark OLS method. It was discovered that with similar number of dynamic terms, in most cases, MGA performs better than SGA in terms of exploring potential solution and outperformed the OLS algorithm in terms of selected number of terms and predictive accuracy. In addition, the use of local search with MGA for fine-tuning the algorithm was also proposed and investigated, named as memetic algorithm (MA). Simulation results demonstrated that in most cases, MA is able to produce an adequate and parsimonious model that can satisfy the model validation tests with significant advantages over OLS, SGA and MGA methods. Furthermore, the case studies on identification of multivariable systems based on real experimental data from two systems namely a turbo alternator and a continuous stirred tank reactor showed that the proposed algorithm could be used as an alternative to adequately identify adequate and parsimonious models for those systems. (254 words)</p>	<p>Purpose and aim</p> <p>Methods</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Conclusion</p>

Sample Abstract

Abstract 4

Despite previous genre studies investigating various professional report genres in different contexts, disciplines and languages, professional report genre in forestry discipline remains the least explored, particularly from a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) perspective. To date, limited findings were reported on how Malay language is used in forestry professional context. This study explored the elements that constitute the generic structure potential (GSP) for forest resource reports (FRR) in forestry discipline, how language is used to represent experiential and textual functions and the role of FRR genre. Six FRR written in Malay and three interviews with forestry officers were used as research data in this study. This qualitative genre analysis study utilised SFL analytical frameworks and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that FRR is a hybrid genre which constitutes ten obligatory main elements and 17 sub-elements explicating typical letter and forestry-related genre elements whereby the GSP for FRR takes a linear representation. Besides, the experiential function of FRR genre was used mainly to represent activities performed by forestry officers through the dominant use of *Action processes* whereby forest areas are seen as the entity most affected by activities taking place. On the other hand, descriptions of forest areas were supplemented mainly through *circumstance of Location*. Findings on the textual function revealed that FRR genre maintains topic on forest areas as the theme selection, and the overall organisation was established through a *derived Theme progression pattern* to position specific details of forest areas and its resources. Meanwhile, findings on the role of FRR genre indicated that FRR provides a preliminary observation and information to assist forestry department in deciding future directions and planning of forestry-related matters. The implication of this study centres on how exploration of genre elements, representation of experiential and textual functions and roles can be explored from SFL genre and metafunctional perspective in studying the use of Malay language. (309 words)

Key Parts

Background

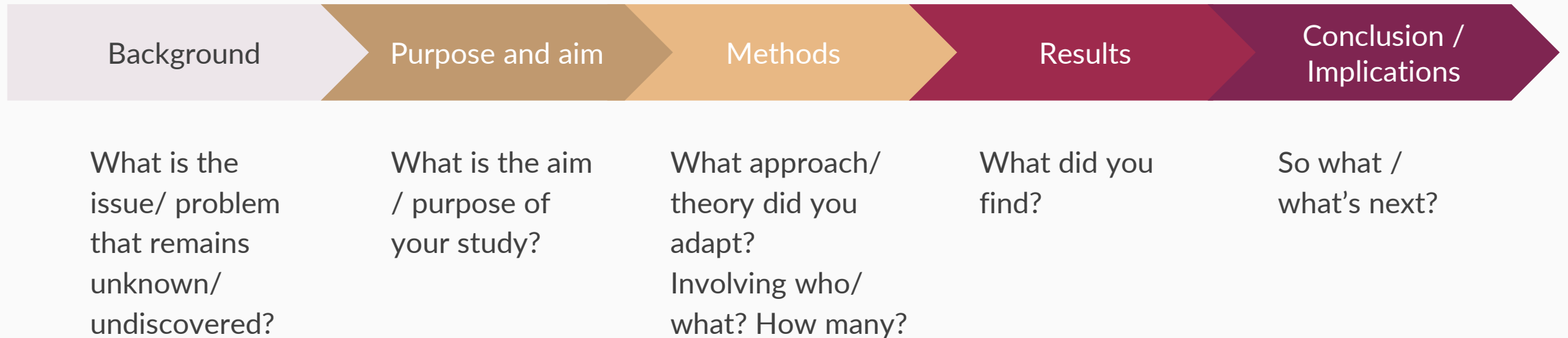
Research gap
Purpose and aim

Methods

Results and
conclusion

Implication

Questions to Answer in Each Section



Abstract Checklist

- The word count is within the required length, or a maximum of one page.
- The abstract appears after the Acknowledgement and before the Table of Contents.
- I have clearly stated my research problem and objectives.
- I have briefly described my methodology.
- I have summarised the most important results.
- I have stated my main conclusions.
- I have mentioned any important limitations and/or recommendations.
- The abstract can be understood by laymen who do not possess prior knowledge on my topic.

**Make
sure you
have
fulfilled
this!**



THANK YOU



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