7.021
Meeting 6: Title and Abstract

Some reminders/announcements

• Final draft of long-term project is due **Friday, May 16 by 5 p.m.** in my office (68-150a) or in my mailbox (14N-233). Note: you’re welcome to turn it in early! Any non-LTP revisions are also due at this point.

• Sign up for a 15-minute conference with me where you’ll get feedback on your LTP title and abstract, receive back any work that I still hold, and have an opportunity to ask me questions.
Tips for Revising Long-Term Projects

• Be sure that all of your sections correspond but at the same time are capable of being understood on their own (i.e., interdependent and independent).
• Include illustrations (at least two) on a separate sheet after the body text (i.e., don’t fitz with inserting illustrations into your text).
• You do not need to turn in preliminary drafts with your final draft.
• Include a letter of transmittal with your final draft.
• Hand in 7.021 assessment form with your LTP.

Letter of Transmittal for L-T Projects

Letter of transmittal should be addressed to your instructor and include.
• A brief description of your project.
• A brief description of your writing and revision process (i.e., how this final draft compares to earlier drafts).
• Your contact information.
Grading Criteria for L-T Projects

- Project is complete.
- Abstract summarizes effectively.
- Introduction orient the reader.
- Methods, Results, and Discussion contain appropriate information.
- Conclusion provides broad perspective.
- Details specified to appropriate length.
- Needless complexity avoided.
- Illustrations clarify or augment text and legends provide appropriate information.
- Language is clear, concise, accurate, and scientifically correct.

What is the Purpose of a Title?

- Indicate the subject of your research.
- Distinguish your research from others of its kind.
- Show continuity with preceding papers.
- Provide key words for indexing.
Rules of Thumb for Titles

- Use a minimum of technical terminology.
- Use fewer than 80 characters.
- Avoid active verbs, numerical values, abbreviations, and punctuation.

What are Some Pitfalls of Titles?

- Too general or too specific.
- Too long or too short.
- Incomprehensible (sometimes from the use of jargon).
- Inaccurate (often a syntax problem).
- Contains abbreviations, chemical formulas, jargon.
Some Bad Titles

- Plantar’s Wart Removal: Report of a Case of Recurrence of Verruca after Curative Excision
- Characteristics of Columbine Flowers are Correlated with Their Pollinators
- Panda Mating Fails: Veterinarian Takes Over
- Gleanings on the Bionomics and Behavior of the East Asiatic Nonsocial Wasps. III. The Subfamily Crabroninae with a Key to the Species of the tribe Crabronini Occurring in Formosa and the Ryukyus, Contributions to the Knowledge of the Behavior of Crabronine Fauna, and Changes in the Taxonomic Position of Three Species of Crabronini Occurring in Japan
- Report of New Health Data Results from the 1999 National ASAP-FYI-ERGO Health Study: Lung Cancer in Women Mushrooms

Some Good Titles

- Effect of Husband’s Education on the Fatness of Wives
- Retrotransposons as Engines of Human Bodily Transformation
- Enhanced Recovery of Bitumen by Steam with Chemical Additives
- Adaptive Nulling in the Hyperthermia Treatment of Cancer
What is the purpose of an abstract?

- A stand alone, mini-version of the paper (250 words or less).
- Summarizes the main sections of the paper.
- States the purpose, findings, and impact of the work.

Abstracts: The Goal is an Economy of Words

- Provide an abstracted version of your paper in as few words as possible.
- Choose each word carefully. Make them clear and significant.
- Provide only the key points.
Language: Needless Complexity

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Language: Too Many Abstract Nouns

- Original:
  - *The existing nature of Mount St. Helens' volcanic ash spewage was handled through the applied use of computer modeling capabilities.*

- Revised:
  - *With Cray computers, we modeled how much ash spewed from Mount St. Helens.*
**Language: Needless Words**

- (already) existing
- At (the) present (time)
- (basic) fundamentals
- (completely) eliminate
- (continue to) remain
- (currently) being
- (currently) underway
- (empty) space
- Had done (previously)
- Introduced (a new)
- Mix (together)
- Never (before)
- None (at al)
- Now (at this time)
- Period (of time)
- (private) industry
- (separate) entities
- Start (out)
- Write (out)
- (still) persists

**Language: Ambiguities**

- Word Choice:
  - *T* cells, rather than *B* cells, appeared *as the* lymphocytes migrated to the thymus gland.
  - *T* cells, rather than *B* cells, appeared *because the* lymphocytes migrated to the thymus gland.

- Syntax: (the ordering of words within a sentence)
  - *In low water temperatures and high toxicity levels of oil, we tested how well the microorganisms survived.*
  - *We tested how well the microorganisms survived in low water temperatures and high toxicity levels of oil.*

- Pronouns: (particularly “it” and “this”)
  - *Because the receiver presented the radiometer with a high-flux environment, it was mounted in a silver-plated stainless steel container.*
Language: Strong Versus Strong Verbs

- made the arrangement for
- made the decision
- made the measurement of
- performed the development of
- arranged
- decided
- measured
- developed

What are Some Pitfalls of Abstracts?

- Contains extraneous detail or information or conclusions not stated in the paper.
- Contains abbreviations, chemical formulas, jargon or references to the literature, tables, or figures.
- Failure to state the purpose of the work at the outset.
- Failure to state the importance of the work and where it leads at the end.
Today’s In-class Exercises

• Complete the Stellar title exercise for your 7.02 lab modules.
• Rewrite the poor titles distributed in class.
• For the disassembled abstract distributed in class, put the sentences in a meaningful order.
• Write a title and abstract for a research article distributed in class.

Out-of-Class Exercises

• Write a title and abstract for your long-term project. Turn it in to me in room 68-150a during your scheduled conference.
• Final drafts of long-term projects are due on May 16 by 5 p.m. in my office (68-580a) or in my mailbox (14N-233).
• Turn in course evaluation form with your long-term project.