

# Abstracts Checklist

The main difference between an abstract and an executive summary is the purpose that it serves.

Is it intended to **summarize the content** of the document? If so, then it functions as an **abstract**.

- Is it a descriptive abstract? If so
- Does it include the following four elements?
  - Purpose
  - Methodology.
  - Results.
  - Conclusions.
- Do the title and abstract together convey the essence of the material covered in the report?
- Does the abstract include the report's main findings, major points, and recommendations?
- Is the abstract placed appropriately?
  - On the title page if it is short.
  - On a page of its own if it is longer.
  - Centered on the page, as is customary.
- Is the abstract longer than one page? If so, edit it again.
- In editing, have you checked for the following problems, which tend to undermine the effectiveness of an abstract?
  - Too much information. Does your abstract include all of the important key words and concepts that are spelled out in the report, without going into too much detail?
  - Overly technical language.
  - List syndrome.
  - Inconsistent terminology. Have you inadvertently introduced any new technical terms in the abstract that were not used in the report?
  - Cut and paste style. Have you carefully edited your abstract so that it flows smoothly from point to point?
- Have you avoided metaphors, analogies, and other shortcuts that might not translate well or be understood by readers whose first language is not English?