Adrian Wallwork

English
for Writing Research Papers

Second Edition

Springer

Adrian Wallwork

English
for Presentations
at International
Conferences

English for Presentations at International Conferences

Springer

Fears
TED.com

Seminar 4
ABSTRACTS

Abstracts

What is an abstract?

What is its purpose?

How important is the abstract?

How many paragraphs?

How many words?

When do you write it?

What is the purpose of the Abstract?

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in the National Comorbidity Survey

Ronald C. Kessler, PhD; Amanda Sonnega, PhD; Evelyn Bromet, PhD; Michael Hughes, PhD; Christopher B. Nelson, MPH, PhD

Background: Data were obtained on the general population epidemiology of *DSM-III-R* posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), including information on estimated lifetime prevalence, the kinds of traumas most often associated with PTSD, sociodemographic correlates, the comorbidity of PTSD with other lifetime psychiatric disorders, and the duration of an index episode.

Methods: Modified versions of the *DSM-III-R* PTSD module from the Diagnostic Interview Schedule and of the Composite International Diagnostic Interview were administered to a representative national sample of 5877 persons aged 15 to 54 years in the part II subsample of the National Comorbidity Survey.

Results: The estimated lifetime prevalence of PTSD is associated with PTSD are combat exposure and witnessing among men, and rape and sexual molestation among women. Posttraumatic stress disorder is strongly comorbid with other lifetime *DSM-III-R* disorders. Survival analysis shows that more than one third of people with an index episode of PTSD fail to recover even after many years.

Conclusions: Posttraumatic stress disorder is more prevalent than previously believed, and is often persistent. Progress in estimating age-at-onset distributions, cohort effects, and the conditional probabilities of PTSD from different types of trauma will require future epidemiologic studies to assess PTSD for all lifetime traumas rather than for only a small number of retrospectively reported "most serious" traumas.

I am going to give various examples of how to write abstracts. The most important thing is to understand:

1 the **structure** (how and in what order the info is presented)

2 the **style** (impersonal or personal)

Do exercises 16, 17 and 18 invidually. Then compare your ideas.

16. Why is it not a good abstract?

Example of a poor Abstract

In the last few years 5G cellular batteries have become increasingly popular in the telecommunications and computer industries. Many authors have studied the various features of such batteries and noted that the lifetime of a 5G cellular battery, in particular those used in the most recent generations of mobile phones, may be subject to the number of times the battery is recharged and how long it is charged for. In addition, it has been found that there is no adequate analytical model to predict this lifetime. Such an accurate model is necessary in order for producers and consumers alike to be able to predict how long the batteries will last and also, in some cases, how they can be recycled. In this work, an analytical model is developed which describes the relationship between the number of times a battery is recharged, the length of time of each individual recharge, and the duration of the battery.

A lot of background information

Very little about what the authors did in their research.

Results?

17. Why is this Abstract better?

18. Why is this abstract, perhaps, even better?

A more dynamic abstract?

The lifetime of a 5G cellular phone battery may be subject to the number of times the battery is recharged and how long it is charged for. To date, there has not been an adequate analytical model to predict this lifetime. **We have developed** an analytical model which predicts the relationship between the number of times a 5G cellular phone battery is recharged, the length of time of each individual recharge, and the duration of the battery. **We validated** this model by comparison with both experimental measurements and finite element analyses, and shows strong agreement for all three parameters. The results for the proposed model are more accurate than results for previous analytical models reported in the literature for 5G cell phones. The new model can be used to design longer lasting batteries. It can also lead towards further models that can predict battery failure. ..

This is not news for the reader. It is more suitable for an introduction rather than an abstract

Tell the reader immediately what your paper is about

Use 'we'

Fears of giving presentations

One in four Americans
are afraid of speaking in public: are you? Why?
What can you do to conquer your fears

typical fears

Being center of attention

Being judged – feeling stupid compared to profs in audience

AKA Impostors' Syndrome

Losing track

Not having enough time

Not feeling prepared

Not being clear or understood

Speaking too fast

Getting + keeping audience attention

English (pronunciation + grammar)

Q & A

TED

TED Recommends

Talks recommended just for you, delivered to your inbox

What interests you?

Technology | Science | Design | Business | Collaboration | Innovation

Social change | Health | Nature | The environment | The future | Communication

Activism | Child development | Personal growth | Humanity | Society | Identity

Community

Next

english mania

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▶ About

TED

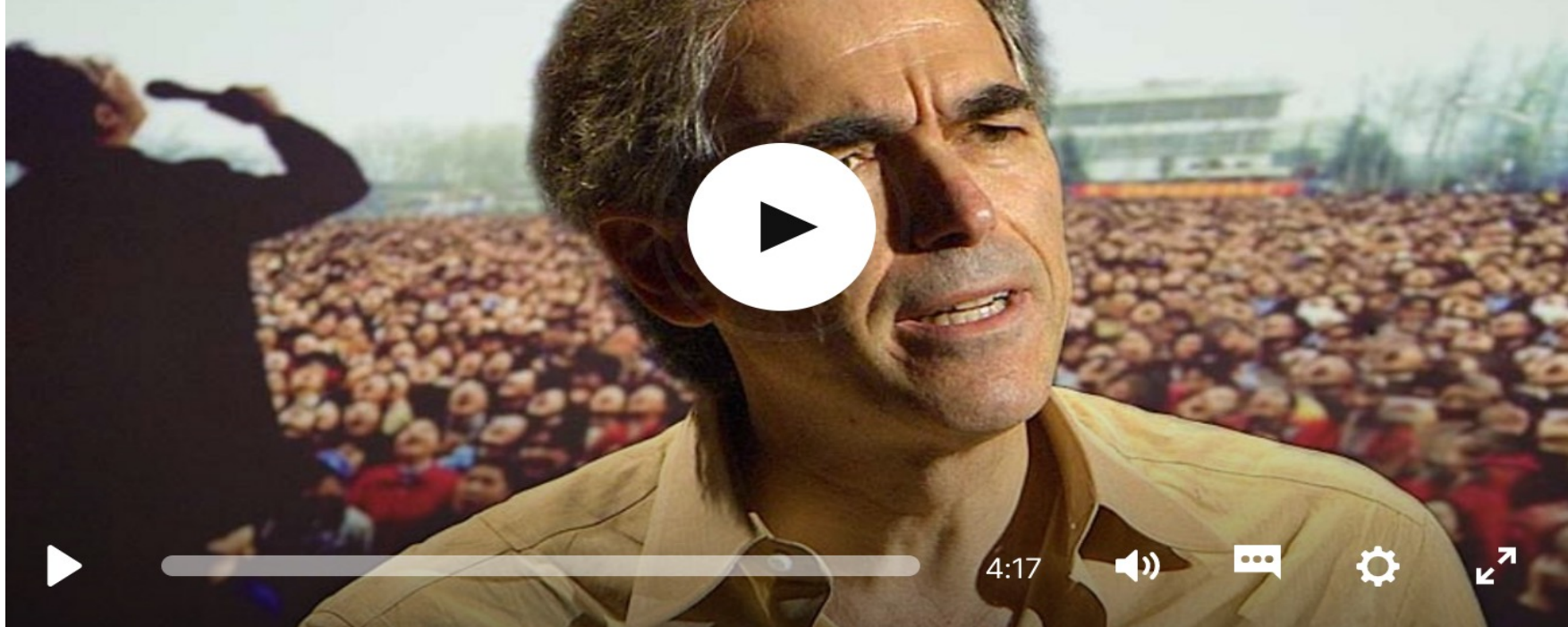Talks recommended

Technology   Science   Design

Health   Nature   The environ

Child development   Personal growth

4:17

4,869,418
Views

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Jay Walker · TED2009

The world's English mania

Details Transcript

Jay Walker explains why two billion people around the world are trying to learn English. He shares photos and spine-tingling audio of Chinese students rehearsing English -- "the world's second language" -- by the thousands.

TED2009 |
February 2009

Related tags

United States

Business

The world's English mania

English ▼

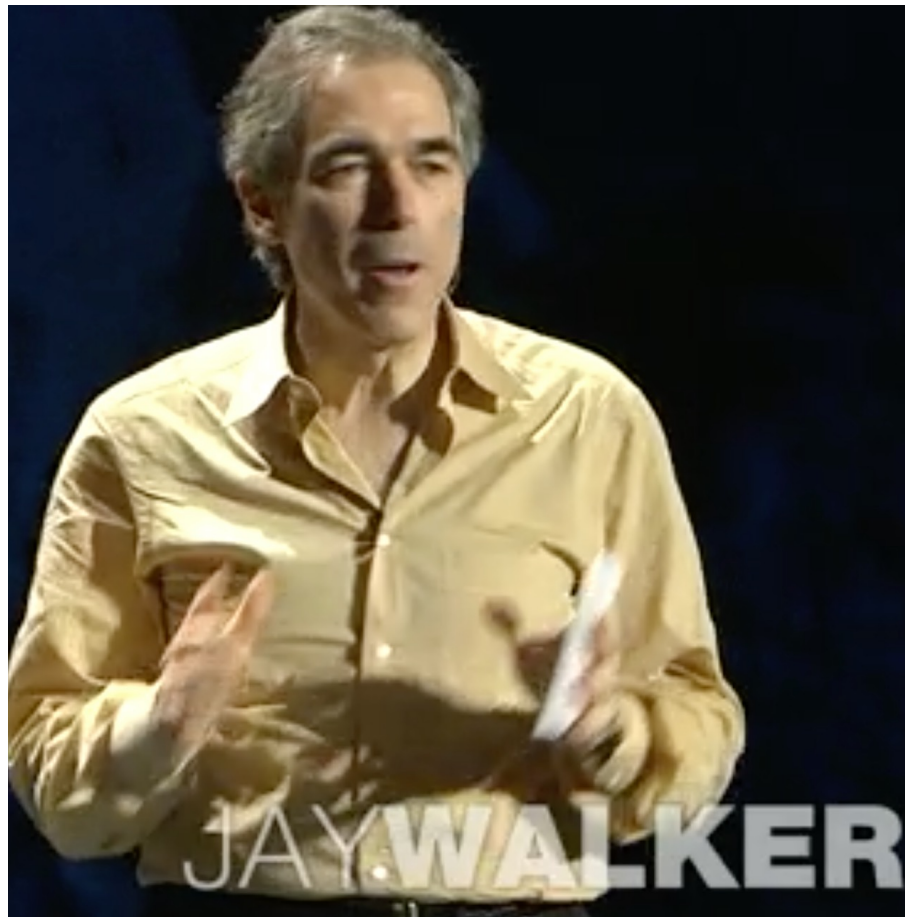|	
00:04	Let's talk about manias. Let's start with Beatlemania.
00:10	(Recording of crowd roaring)
00:12	Hysterical teenagers, crying, screaming, pandemonium.
00:17	(Recording of crowd roaring)
00:20	Sports mania: deafening crowds, all for one idea -- get the ball in the net. (Recording) Goal! Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping, there's visions. Manias can be good. Manias can be alarming. Or manias can be deadly.

On the next slide are questions to think about as you are watching Jay's presentation

Who do you think his audience is?

Structure
Speed of voice
Length of sentences
How does he modulate his voice
What type of words does he stress in particular

What does he use in case he forgets what he is going to say?

Does he smile?
Is he a great presenter?
What aspects of his presentation and delivery could you usefully imitate / adopt?

Could you do this kind of presentation at a conference? Why? Why not?

I am now going to analyse the points below

Who do you think his audience is?

Structure
Speed of voice
Length of sentences
How does he modulate his voice
What type of words does he stress in particular

What does he use in case he forgets what he is going to say?

Does he smile?
Is he a great presenter?
What aspects of his presentation and delivery could you usefully imitate / adopt?

Could you do this kind of presentation at a conference? Why? Why not?

What do you NOT agree with regarding what I have said during the course so far?

I am an academic: I don't think I can use the TED approach or your ideas in my presentations.

1

Presenting research project to uni commission: I agree

2

Presenting research at conference: unless your research is spectacularly good / interesting, you will remain anonymous if your presentation is the same as everyone else's.

Obviously, there is a difference between an expert and non-expert audience, but the techniques are the same.

My research is super complex. How can I make it simpler / fun for my audience?

Look to see how journalists and documentaries make science **more accessible**.
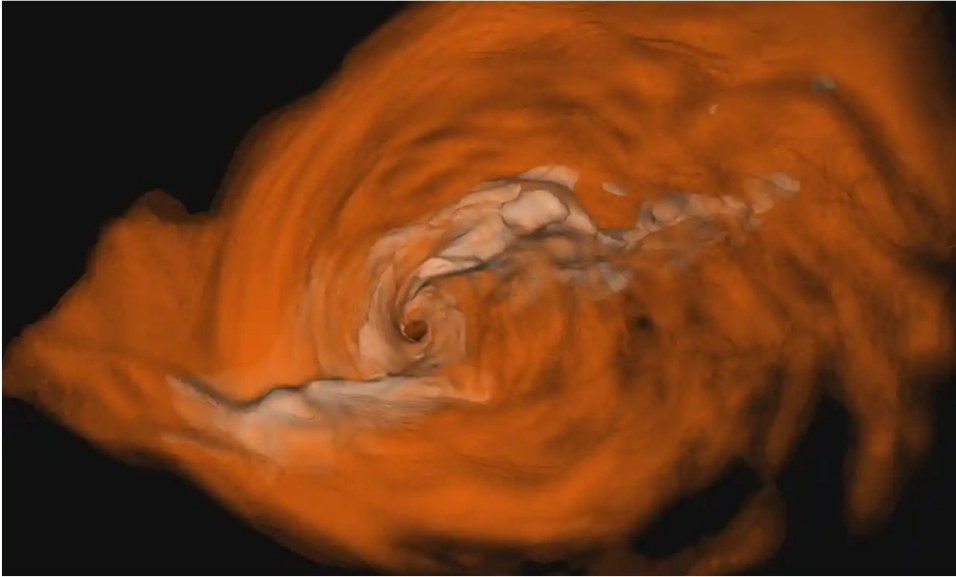
Use their techniques in your first one or two slides.

Documentary films

'Stranger than anything dreamed up by sci-fi': will we ever understand black holes?

In the new documentary Black Holes: The Edge of All We Know, the work of Stephen Hawking and others in trying to figure out a mystery for the age is put under the spotlight

David Smith *in Washington*

🐦 @smithinamerica

Wed 26 May 2021 07.09 BST

▲ A visualisation from Black Holes: The Edge of All We Know Photograph: Sandbox Films

So, what would it feel like to fall into a black hole?

"Well, at the moment you crossed the horizon, you wouldn't feel anything – there would be nothing dramatic," Peter Galison, co-founder of the Black Hole Initiative at Harvard University, says over the phone.

Huh. Doesn't sound *too* bad. "But inevitably, you would be pulled towards

I am an academic: I need to use a 'rich' vocabulary.

Do you have proof that a rich vocabulary and eloquent style will improve the chances of your paper being:

i) Published?

Ii) Read?

iii) Cited?

However, there **is 100% proof** that a simple writing styles leads to greater readability and a greater chance of being read and published.

In any case, you CAN be simple AND eloquent.

I am an academic: I don't have time to think about every word I use, being concise etc. I have more important things to do.

The best data, methods, and analyses are useless if you don't know how to properly communicate your research findings. Yet that is exactly what Professor Wallwork taught me: How to communicate my work more clearly to other researchers.

Hans Jonas Gunzelmann (SNS PhD student, 2021)

I am an academic so …
So what?

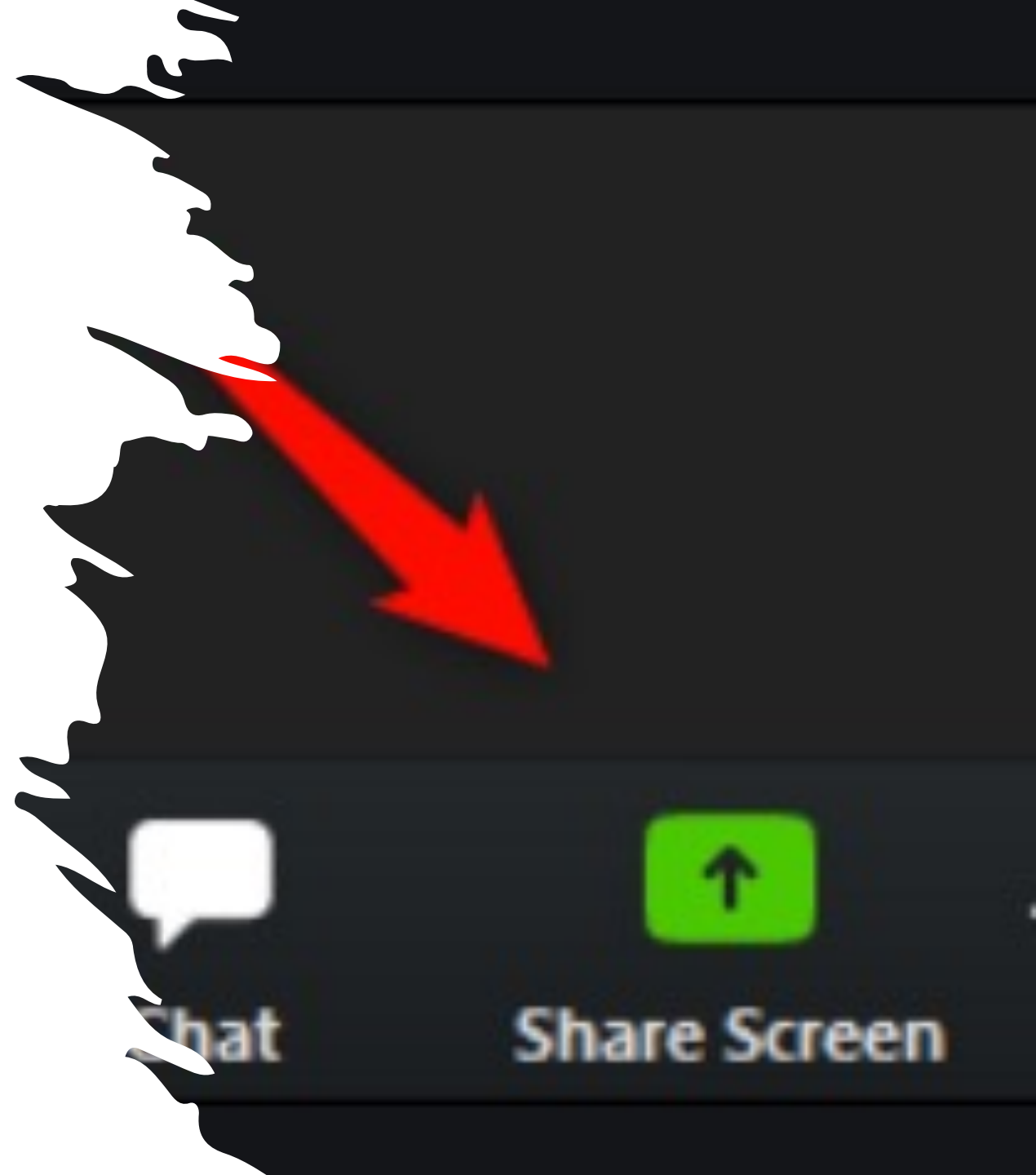|		
E allora?	Na und?	所以呢？
¿Y qué?	तो क्या हुआ?	pa što?

Things evolve. Including writing and presentation styles. Don't be fossilized in the past.

In this course, just give my guidelines and strategies a chance. Try them. If you are sure that they don't work, then don't use them.

Your turn ... to do a presentation ...

Things to improve

(also shown in Sem 2)

- Make sure your head is in the middle of the screen
- Headphones – don't wear them
- Don't hold the microphone in your hand
- Don't introduce yourself or your department *
- Don't read your title
- Too much info – too much text
- Too much happening in same slide
- More slides does not equal more time but does equal more dynamic
- Don't compete with your slides *
- Don't spend too long on same slide
- Don't talk too much
- Animations – sometimes good, sometimes too distracting

Back to Abstracts

Is it Time to Leave Him?

Sentences 1-2: what you found / key result

Three red flags **were identified** that indicate that the time to leave him has come. These red flags are: five burps per day, two episodes of mansplaining per day, and five games on the Playstation with friends per week.

simple past to say what you did in your research

*Note: The guidelines for the present and past tense in this and the next slides, refer to their **conventional** use in an abstract but not necessarily in other sections of the paper.*

Sentences 3-4:

Introduce background by relating to S1-2

Many women **have** doubts about the right moment for leaving their partner. Often women **wait** in hope for a change in their partner's habits.

simple present to express scientific facts not found by you

S5-7: use background (S3-4) to justify what you did

One hundred couples **were** analyzed, recording their daily life for six months. Women **were** provided with a form to mark the moments of annoyance recorded during the day. Burps, sitting-zapping sessions and games on the Playstation with friends **produced** the highest index of annoyance.

simple past to talk about your **METHODS** and your **RESULTS**

Penultimate sentence (8):

provide more info on your results

The probability of eliminating these habits **was found** to be significantly low when the three red flags had been operative for more than three months.

simple past to say what the result was

Final sentences (9, 10):

Implications

Thus, these numbers **provide** a good indication of when the time to leave him has come. With these red flags, women will no longer have to waste their time waiting for the right moment.

simple present to say what you believe your research means

Dynamic abstracts: What readers want in the order they want it

1. What you did + the key result, **i.e. begin with info that the reader does NOT already know**

2. Introduce background by connecting to what you said in (1).

3. Use the background information (max 30%) to justify what you did.

4. More info on your results.

5. Implications of your research.

Summary: Present simple vs Past simple in Abstracts

Present simple – whatever is already known + implications of your results

Smoking **causes** cancer …

Our results **demonstrate** that …

Past simple – what you found

In our study, smoking **caused** a 5% increase in cancer amongst 50-year-olds. We **found** that …

Summary: Present Perfect in FIRST LINE OF Abstracts

YES! ACTIVE FORM

With **personal form (*we*)** to announce in the **first sentence** what you have done.

We have found a cure for cancer.

We have developed a new method for treating cancer.

We (have) investigated six treatments for cancer.

= We will talk about our cure in the present paper.

NO! PASSIVE FORM

Do not use present perfect in the passive form in the first sentence of an abstract to announce your work:

A cure for cancer has been found …

= by someone else, and we don't know when or where these results were published

Tenses in Abstracts vary from journal to journal. The one below is an engineering abstact entirely in the present.

An optimized V-notched specimen **is proposed** for the determination of mode III, or torsional, and critical distance. Numerical procedures **are provided** for the inverse determination of this length … An experimental example **is shown** on steel 42CrMo4+QT, with clear evidence of … A parametric analysis **is then presented** to evaluate the specimen dimension size effects on the …

Here is another one all in the present and all in the first person.

In much of the political economy literature, social democratic governments are assumed to defend the interests of labor. The main thrust of this article is that labor is divided into those with secure employment (insiders) and those without (outsiders). I argue that the goals of social democratic parties are often best served by pursuing policies that benefit insiders while ignoring the interests of outsiders. I analyze Eurobarometer data and annual macrodata from 16 OECD countries from 1973 to 1995. I explore the question of whether strategies prevalent in the golden age of social democracy have been neglected and Left parties have abandoned the goal of providing equality and security to the most vulnerable sectors of the labor market. By combining research on political economy, institutions, and political behavior, my analysis demonstrates that insider–outsider politics are fundamental to a fuller explanation of government partisanship, policy-making, and social democracy since the 1970s.

1 Write the first three lines of an abstract on your research (you can invent what you like if you need to).

2 Share your abstract with the others in your group.

3 Think of ways you could improve your colleagues' abstracts.

Post your abstract on the chat.

How interesting are these beginnings?

In the last few years …
The issue of xyz is becoming increasingly the subject of research …
This paper presents …
A new method for the design of …
The aim of this research is to ..
Cancer is a worldwide problem ..

How excited will the referee be after reading these beginnings?

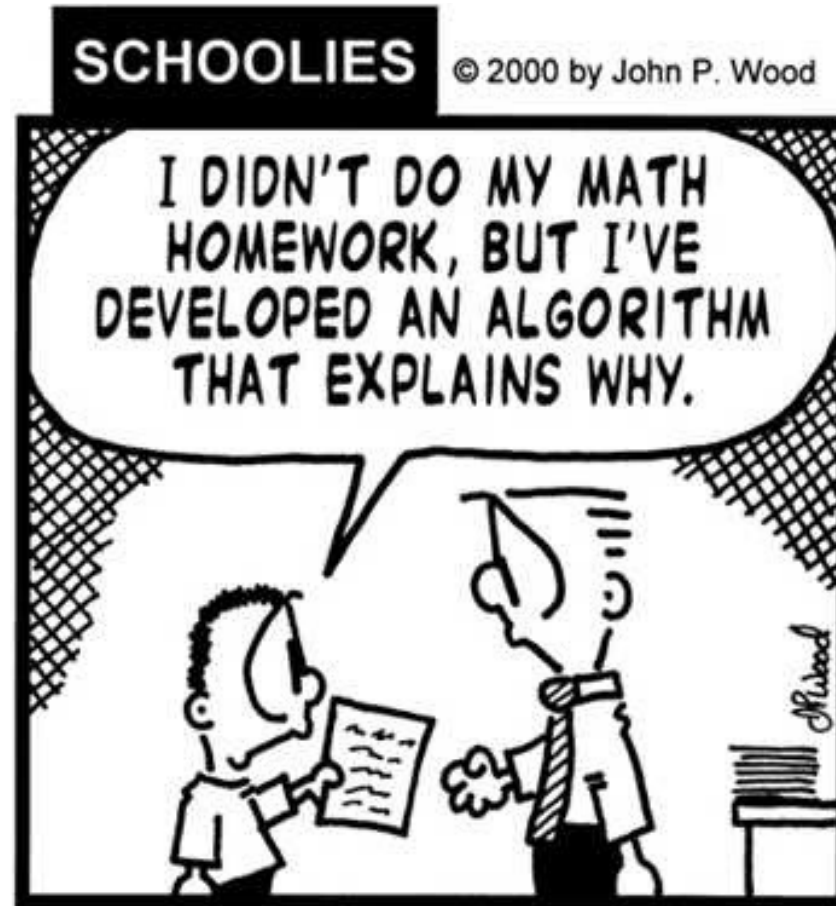# Make your first sentence eye-catching

Try to make the referee's life a little bit
more interesting.
Be different.
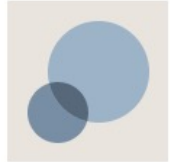Sell yourself!

Homework:
reply to my email with an Abstract

Adrian Wallwork
Founder e4ac
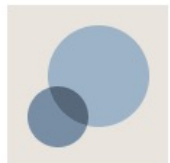
I studied humanities ...

Education

University of Manchester
English Language and Literature, George Gissing Memorial Prize for top student in English literature
1977 – 1980
Activities and Societies: Anti-racism events

Suggested new theories for interpreting the supposed love poems of Royalist poets during the English civil war.

Uppingham
High School, Studied Britain's future bankers, accountants, lawyers, politicians in the making.
1972 – 1976
Activities and Societies: Edited school magazine and attempted (but failed) to publish articles criticizing the public (i.e. private, elitist) school system. Attempted (but failed) to overturn the antiquated prefect/fagging system and the absurd hierarchy and cruel rituals it involved.