ABSTRACTS

To inform others of their research, scientists and engineers write journal articles and give "papers" at meetings. Abstracts are prepared to serve either or both of two purposes:

(a) To enable a reader to decide whether this topic is of sufficient interest to warrant taking the time to read the entire article or to go hear the paper.

(b) To acquaint a reader with recent research results without needing to read the entire article or to hear the paper.

An abstract is required for all projects and research papers. It is recommended (but not required) that you use the ISEF Official Abstract & Certification Form. The abstract should appear on the display board or in a vertical position at the project.

General Guidelines

1. Abstracts should be single-spaced using 12 point type from a black ribbon or laser cartridge. Abstracts may not exceed 250 words. Type title (ALL CAPITALS); your last name, first name and middle initial; your home address (street, city, state and zip code); and your school's name, city and state at the top of the abstract. Team projects must include all team member names and should use the group leader's address.

Example:

EFFECTS OF MARINE ENGINE EXHAUST WATER ON ALGAE
Jones, Mary E.
123 Main Street, St. Cloud, MN  56301
Hometown High School, St. Cloud, Minnesota

An abstract should include:

a. the purpose of the experiment,

b. the procedures used,

c. data, and

d. conclusions.

It may also include any possible research applications. However, only minimal reference to previous work may be included.

An abstract should not include:

a. acknowledgements, or

b. work or procedures done by the mentor.

2. In describing completed research use the past tense and third person; use the present tense when stating existing facts and what is in the article or paper.

3. Spelling errors and poor sentence structure should be avoided.

4. Assume that the reader has a good general technical vocabulary but minimize use of highly specialized words or abbreviations.

5. If reference to the procedure employed is essential, try to restrict it to identification of the method or type of process employed.

6. State results, conclusions, or findings in a clear concise fashion.

7. If your statement of findings reveals what your objectives were, there is no need to make a specific statement of objectives or motivation; the wordage saved can be used to say something else.

If you use the ISEF Abstract and Certification form, at the bottom there are four questions regarding the research that the student performed. Please read each question carefully, answer appropriately, and sign in the signature box to certify your answers.

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A GUIDELINE FOR ABSTRACT PREPARATION FOR BOTH PROJECTS AND RESEARCH PAPERS. USING THESE SUGGESTIONS WILL BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF YOU ARE SELECTED TO GO TO THE STATE SCIENCE FAIR AND ESSENTIAL IF YOU ARE SELECTED TO GO TO THE INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR.