

How to Write an Intel ISEF Abstract

What is the purpose of the abstract?

The abstract should be a brief, yet comprehensive synopsis of the research project. It should seek to highlight the research question(s), experimental procedures, data, and conclusions in a way that is concise and easy to understand. It will be reviewed by Special Award Organization and Grand Award Judges to determine whether the project stands out within its category or qualifies for special awards. The general public and other Intel ISEF visitors read the abstract for a quick overview of the research design and findings.

Rules for completion:

The abstract should be 250 words or less. Do not discuss specific aspects of the research in great detail, including experimental procedures and statistical methods. Any information that is unnecessary to include in a brief explanation should be saved for the written research paper or the project exhibit board.

If the project is a continuation from a previous year, the abstract should summarize the current year's work only. If mention of supporting research from previous year(s) is necessary, it must be minimal.

If the abstract text includes special characters, such as mathematical symbols, which won't be translated electronically, please spell out the symbol.

Do not include acknowledgements in the abstract. This includes any references to mentors, institutional facilities, and awards or patents received.

What should the abstract include?

Title

Finalist's Name (or names, if a team project)

School Name, City and State, Country

Purpose

- An introductory statement providing background, namely the reason, for investigating the project topic.
- A statement of the problem the research is looking to solve or the questions being tested.

Procedure

- A brief overview of how the investigation was conducted, highlighting key points, and including methods and resources used.
- Do not provide details about materials used in the research unless they greatly influenced the procedure or were needed to conduct the investigation.
- An abstract should only include procedures done by the Finalist. Do not include work done by a mentor (such as surgical procedures) or work done prior to the Finalist's involvement.

Observations/Data/Results

- This section should provide key results that lead directly to the conclusions you have drawn.
- Do not include unnecessary data or observations about the results, nor tables, charts, graphs or other images.
- While these belong in the research paper or the project board, they do not belong in the formal Intel ISEF abstract.
- Unless significant, do not include any of the experimental design difficulties encountered in research.

Conclusions

- This section should be confined to a short summary in 1-2 sentences. It is a reflection on the research process and results, which may include conclusive ideas, important applications, and implications of the research.
- The Intel ISEF abstract does not include a bibliography. The Intel ISEF requires the bibliography as part of the research plan to be provided on Form 1A.

Best practices:

Remember- Revision is Key

- Make sure that the abstract includes all parts outlined in this guide
- Omit unnecessary details and discussions
- Use the past tense in descriptions
- Write in short, but complete sentences
- Avoid extra jargon and any slang
- Use concise wording throughout, especially when expressing concepts and processes with scientific language
- Check for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation
- Ask for writing help from an English teacher or librarian. Writing an abstract is an exercise in using language effectively to convey scientific ideas and procedures.
- It never hurts to have an extra pair of eyes glance it over.