research nest

LESSON 9 · RESEARCH NEST COURSE

Finishing and Sharing Your Paper

> *If someone only reads your abstract and looks at one figure, would they know what you found?*

Most readers decide in under a minute whether to keep reading

Sharing at a club symposium counts as real research communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

What you will be able to do today

- Rewrite an abstract so every sentence has a clear job, including the findings
- Make a table or figure that a reader understands without the main text
- Explain what peer review is and why it matters
- Check whether a journal or "opportunity" is trustworthy using Think. Check. Submit.
- Choose a sharing route that fits your project and goals

KEY IDEA INVENTED EXAMPLE

An abstract is the whole paper in miniature

Structured abstracts use headings; unstructured ones are a single paragraph. Either way, each sentence has a job.

INVENTED HUMANITIES EXAMPLE: A HISTORY CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Local newspapers rarely appear in studies of how towns remembered the 1918 influenza.[1] This paper asks how two regional papers described the epidemic between 1918 and 1920.[2] I analysed 60 articles, coding tone and the groups each article blamed or praised.[3] Coverage moved from blame to praise for nurses; I argue this shaped later memorials.[4]

Context and gap — why this matters

Question or aim

Method and sources

Findings and argument — never leave these out

Adapted from: UNC Writing Center, Abstracts

KEY IDEA

Tables and figures must stand alone

A reader should understand a figure from its number, title, labels and note alone.

Number and title

Figure 1, then a short descriptive title in title case. Say what is shown, not "Graph".

Labels and units

Name every axis or column and give units, e.g. "Noise level, dB(A)" or "Rating (1–5)".

Note or caption

Explain sample size, abbreviations and what error bars or symbols mean.

Table or figure?

Tables for exact values; figures for patterns. Very small data sets go in the text.

Adapted from: Purdue OWL, APA Tables and Figures; UNC Writing Center, Figures and Charts

KEY IDEA

Peer review and your sharing options

Peer review means independent experts check work before it is published. Journal publication is only one route — and it is optional.

1. **Club symposium**
   Short talk or poster; peers and teachers ask questions
2. **School or local fair**
   Judges give structured feedback using a rubric
3. **Competition**
   Strict rules, deadlines and formats; read every requirement
4. **Repository or website**
   School or club archive; check privacy and permissions first
5. **Journal (optional)**
   Peer review, revision, possible rejection; check it is trustworthy

Adapted from: Elsevier, What is peer review?; Wiley, What is Peer Review?

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 1 INVENTED EXAMPLE · SIMULATED DATA

Noor tightens her abstract

The full revised abstract adds aim, method and a limitation in about 200 words

BEFORE (VAGUE, NO FINDINGS)

Noise is a big problem for students. This paper looks at noise in school and how it affects concentration. A survey and interviews were done. The results are discussed and some recommendations are made.

AFTER (EXCERPT)

Across three study spaces (n = 84), mean concentration fell from 3.9/5 in the library quiet zone to 2.6/5 in the cafeteria corner; noise and ratings were moderately negatively associated (rho = −0.48). Interviews linked distraction to unpredictable speech.

WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 2 INVENTED EXAMPLE · SIMULATED DATA

Noor fixes her main figure

Before: untitled 3-D pie chart, no units, colours only in a legend

After: numbered title, labelled spaces with mean noise, n per group, scale to 5

Figure 1. Mean concentration rating by study space (library n = 31, study hall n = 27, cafeteria n = 26)



WORKED EXAMPLE · STEP 3 INVENTED EXAMPLE

Noor decides where to share

Noor will present a poster at the club symposium. She also checks a student journal she found online before deciding anything.

- [ ] Do Ms Rahman or other teachers know this journal? — No one has heard of it
- [ ] Is the publisher named, with a real address and contact details? — Only a web form
- [ ] Is the peer review process explained, with a named editorial board? — Vague
- [ ] Are all fees stated clearly up front? — Fee mentioned only after acceptance
- [ ] Is it listed in DOAJ or a member of COPE, as it claims? — Not found in DOAJ

FRAMEWORK

Where should I share my work?

You can combine routes: present first, then revise using the feedback

What do you most want from sharing your research right now?	
Feedback and practice explaining it	→ Club symposium or class talk: short slot, friendly questions, quick
Judged recognition and a deadline	→ School fair or competition: read the rules, format and ethics forms early
A permanent, findable record	→ School or club repository, with supervisor approval and no personal data
Formal peer review	→ A journal chosen with your supervisor and checked with Think. Check. Submit.

Adapted from: Think. Check. Submit.; NYU Libraries, How to Create a Research Poster

COMMON MISTAKES

Common mistakes and how to fix them

Mistake	Why it hurts	Fix
Abstract with no findings	Readers cannot tell what you discovered	Add one sentence with your key result
Unreadable figure: tiny text, no units	Fails the stand-alone test	Label axes with units; enlarge text; add a note
Paying a "high school journal" fast	May be predatory: no real review, lost fees	Run Think. Check. Submit. with your supervisor
Ignoring author or competition guidelines	Desk rejection or disqualification	Make a checklist from the rules before formatting
Overclaiming in the abstract	Implies causation you cannot show	Use "associated with" and state a limitation

PAIRS · 15 MINUTES INVENTED EXAMPLE

Practice: is this "opportunity" trustworthy?

AN INVENTED EMAIL RECEIVED BY A CLUB MEMBER

"Dear Esteemed Scholar, your brilliant work deserves global impact! The International Journal of Young Research Excellence invites your paper." [1] "Peer review completed in 72 hours. Acceptance guaranteed for high school authors." [2] "Indexed in all major databases. Publication fee: USD 349, payable within 24 hours." [3] "Reply to editor.office.ijyre@freemail.example. Offer ends Friday." [4]

Q1: What is suspicious about the greeting and praise?

Q2: Is this realistic for genuine peer review?

Q3: How could you verify the indexing claim?

Q4: What would Think. Check. Submit. ask you to look for?

MODEL RESPONSE INVENTED EXAMPLE

Model response: evaluating the email

Advice: do not reply or pay. Show your supervisor, and share your work at the symposium instead.

Question	Evidence in the email	Verdict
Do we know the journal?	Generic praise; no one trusted recognises it	No
Is the publisher identifiable?	Free email address only; no address or named editor	No
Is peer review clear?	72-hour review and guaranteed acceptance	No — not real review
Are fees transparent?	Fee demanded within 24 hours under deadline pressure	No — pressure tactic

TEMPLATE

Sharing-readiness checklist

- [ ] Abstract within the word limit and states aim, method, key findings and a limitation
- [ ] Title is specific and matches the abstract
- [ ] Every figure and table is numbered, titled, labelled with units and has a note
- [ ] Venue rules met: length, format, reference style, deadline, required forms
- [ ] Data anonymised; no names, faces or identifiable quotes; supervisor has approved
- [ ] Any journal checked with Think. Check. Submit. and an adult before submitting
- [ ] Two-minute talk rehearsed; three likely questions prepared

Adapted from: UNC Writing Center; Purdue OWL; NYU Libraries; Think. Check. Submit.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Check your understanding

Next step: present your poster or talk at the club symposium

Bring your revised abstract, one stand-alone figure and the completed checklist

Which sentence is most important to add to an abstract that only says "Results are discussed"?

A A thank-you to participants **B** The main finding with a number or theme **C** A list of all references **D** A rhetorical question

A figure titled "Chart 1" has unlabelled axes. Which fix helps most?

A Add 3-D effects **B** Number, title and label axes with units **C** Use more colours **D** Delete the note

A journal guarantees acceptance in 72 hours for a fee due tomorrow. What should you do?

True or false: you must publish in a journal for your research to count.

SOURCES & FURTHER READING

Sources

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