

Editing Checklist

Editing the Title and Abstract—Checklist for Editors

1. Does the title encapsulate the key conclusion of the paper?
 - Is the message contained in an active verb? (it doesn't have to be, but that's often the best way to achieve impact and concision)Or does it describe a type of study (e.g. a survey)?
 - If so, can it be made punchier? (for instance by highlighting an interesting finding or methodology)
2. Are all the elements of an abstract present?
(possible answers include yes, no, somewhat, N/A, or whatever else you feel like writing)
 - Background/significance
 - Statement of question, hypothesis, or purpose
 - Approach, methodology
 - Results
 - Conclusions/Implications/Applications
3. Is there extraneous information in the abstract? Could some information be simplified, eliminated or moved to other sections?
 - Too much background
 - Too many experimental details, too much numerical data
 - References, statistics
4. Structure/outline
 - Are the different sections of the abstract clearly delineated?
 - Either by headings (if the journal asks for a "structured abstract")
 - By signals: "This study addressed whether..." "We found that..." "These observations demonstrate that..."
 - Or by appropriate tense shifts (present tense for background and conclusion, past tense for approaches and results)
 - Do the conclusions/answers stated at the end of the abstract mirror the question/hypothesis/purpose stated at the beginning?
 - In particular by using the same key words.
 - Does the abstract tell the same story as the paper?
 - In particular, are the rationale for the study and the main conclusions the same as in the paper?
5. Concision:
 - Can some "clutter" be eliminated?
 - "There is X that does Y" → "X does Y"
 - "It is well known that X does Y" → "X does Y"
 - Can some wording be simplified?
 - By putting the action in the verb: "An increase in blood pressure is seen" → "The blood pressure increases."
 - By avoiding the passive voice.
 - By using parallel constructions for similar types of information (which often eliminates cumbersome repetitions).
5. Overall evaluation
 - what is well done:
 - what needs work: