

Writing Assignment 4

Due Nov 10, 2008

Write a *Article Abstract* for the “Newton’s Second Law” experiment.

Recall that an *Article Abstract* is a summary of a paper to be published in an academic journal. It is written with the knowledge that a full written report will be published, in which anyone who is interested can read about the details. Therefore, the function of an Article Abstract is more to allow others to quickly find your work, understand what it is, and to entice them to read the full report. Since all the details will be published, and since the abstracts need to be archived for easy searching, there are stringent limitations on the type of contents.

This is the kind of abstract described in the lab manual, (including the changes I asked you to make to the printed manual at the beginning of the course).

Differences from *Presentation Abstracts* include:

- The Abstract should only be a single paragraph.
- No equations.
- No figures, graphs, or tables.
- A shorter length. For this assignment, the length should be $\frac{3}{4}$ page (12pt font, double-spaced).

Key items, in either type of Abstract, are conciseness and high information density. For example,

- don’t use headings such as “**Statement of Purpose:** In this lab...” In fact, even the stock phrase “The purpose of this lab was” is a waste of words. Instead, your statement of purpose sentence should get straight to the point.
- Similarly, a list of equipment followed by a separate description of how it functioned is a waste of space. A single sentence can serve both functions.
- Minor or inconsequential equipment should be omitted. Everyone can guess that you used a meter stick to measure lengths. It makes no difference which computer program you used to make your graph. In fact, it makes no difference whether you used a computer at all. You presumably would have obtained the same results with a slide rule, except that it would have taken much more time.

The hardest part about an Article Abstract is getting all the important information into the space allowed. Make sure everything in the abstract clearly conveys something important.