

# Writing Abstracts

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- # Getting Ready for CSA and SSSP  
(and ASAs too!)

- # Graduate Student Writing Workshop

- # December 5 2013

- # Jean E. Wallace

# What is an abstract?

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- # An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work.
- # It should be helpful in deciding whether to read the full paper and for indexing the article.

# How do I write an abstract?

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- # Importance/rationale for paper/topic
- # Research problem
- # Methodology
- # Results
- # Conclusions

# Writing an abstract from a finished paper

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- # Reverse outlining
- # Cut and paste
- # Revise, revise, revise

# Writing an abstract for an unwritten paper

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- # Importance/rationale for paper/topic
- # Research problem
- # Methodology
- # Results
- # Conclusions

# Qualities of a good abstract

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- # A unified, coherent, concise stand alone paragraph
- # Follows an introduction/body/conclusion structure
- # Flows logically
- # Adds no new information
- # Is understandable to a wide audience
- # May use passive voice

## Example 1: Qualitative Study Abstract

Jerolmack, C. (2007). Animal Practices, Ethnicity, and Community: The Turkish Pigeon Handlers of Berlin. *ASR*, 72(6): 874-894.

1. Though largely overlooked by scholars of ethnicity and culture, animal practices can structure and reflect identity and social relations.
2. Based on individual and group interviews and observations in Berlin, Germany, this study examines how a group of Turkish men experience and assign significance to the activity of caring for domestic pigeons.
3. Building on approaches to ethnicity that follow the "cognitive turn," as well as recent studies of human-animal interaction and cultural examinations of nature and the environment, this article demonstrates how: (1) these men frame their animal practices within their understandings of ethnicity, culture, and territory; and (2) communal relationships formed through pigeon caretaking reinforce definitions of Turkish ethnicity and culture for participants.
4. Beyond offering in situ data on the link between animal practices and ethnicity, the analyses and case suggest how and why sociologists should consider animals and nature as potential constitutive objects of ethnic identity and culture.

### Example 3: Quantitative Study Abstract

Rippeyoung, P.H.L., & Noonan, M.C. (2012). Is Breastfeeding Truly Cost Free? Income Consequences of Breastfeeding for Women. *ASR*, 77(2):244-267.

1. Based on studies showing health advantages for breastfeeding mothers and their infants, pediatricians and other breastfeeding advocates encourage new mothers to breastfeed their babies for at least the first six months of their infants' lives, arguing that breast milk is best for infants, families, and society, and it is cost free.
2. Few empirical studies, however, document how the decision to breastfeed instead of formula-feed is associated with women's post-birth earnings.
3. This is an important omission, given that the majority of women today work for pay, and many work in job environments incompatible with breastfeeding.
4. Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, our results show that mothers who breastfeed for six months or longer suffer more severe and more prolonged earnings losses than do mothers who breastfeed for shorter durations or not at all.
5. The larger post-birth drop in earnings for long-duration breastfeeders is due to a larger reduction in labor supply.
6. We discuss the implications of these findings for gender equality at home and at work.

# Conference Deadlines

- # **Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP):**
  - Paper or extended abstract (2-3 page summary of intended presentation) submitted online by January 31 2014 by midnight (EST). Conference is August 15-17 in San Francisco, CA.
- # **Canadian Sociological Association (CSA):**
  - Abstracts (100-200 words) submitted online by January 31 2014 (midnight). Conference is May 26-30 Brock University in St. Catharines, ON.
- # **American Sociological Association (ASA):**
  - 15-35 page paper submitted online by January 8 2014 by 3:00 pm (EST). Conference is August 16-19 in San Francisco, CA.

# Next Writing Workshop

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- # Thursday January 16<sup>th</sup> 2014
- # Same time, same place
- # Peer Review of CSA/SSSP/ASA abstracts
- # Bring 5 copies with you for review
- # Abstract prizes for the top three abstracts

# Topics for Winter 2014

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- # Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>: Peer Review of Abstracts
- # Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>: Formatting Documents, Tables and Figures
- # Feb 20<sup>th</sup>: *Reading Week (no WW)*
- # Mar. 6<sup>th</sup>: *Graduate Symposium (no WW)*
- # Mar. 20<sup>th</sup>: Effective Recruitment Posters
- # Apr. 3<sup>rd</sup> : Results and Discussions