Abstracts differ in different fields. But most follow one of three patterns. To determine which patterns are used in your field, ask your teacher or look in a standard journal.

1. **Context + Problem + Main Point**
   This kind of abstract is an abbreviated introduction. It begins with a sentence or two to establish the context of previous research, continues with a sentence or two to state the problem, and then concludes with the main result of the research:

   Computer folklore has long held that character-based user interfaces promote more serious work than do graphical user interfaces (GUI), a belief that seemed to be confirmed by Hailo (1990). **Context** But Hailo’s study was biased by the same folklore that it purported to confirm. **Problem** In this study, thirty-eight students in the same technical communication class were randomly assigned to one of two computer labs, one with character-based interfaces (MS-DOS), the other with graphical interfaces (Macintosh OS). **Summary** Documents produced were evaluated on three criteria: content, format, and mechanics. **Main point** There was no significant difference between the two groups on any of the three criteria.

   In years to come, some researcher may search for exactly the research you have done. That search will be done by a computer looking for keywords in titles and abstracts. So when you write yours, imagine looking for your own research. What words should a researcher look for? Put them in your title and abstract.