Tips for Writing an Abstract for Your Japanese Research Report

（英語アブストラクト執筆のヒントとワークシート レポート版）

To write an English abstract for your research report, follow these three steps:

1) **Read the overview.**

2) **Write your answers on the worksheet.**

3) **Refer to the reference pages as needed.**

Table of Contents

1. Overview

An abstract is a short summary of your report so readers know what it is about. They can then know if it is important enough for their research to read or to keep looking for more suitable articles. Writing an abstract in English is important so that your research can be understood by people who cannot read Japanese.

アブストラクトは研究報告の簡潔な概要である。その目的は読者に何が書いてあるかを伝えることにある。アブストラクトを読むことで読者は、自分の研究にとって読む価値があるのか、それとも他により適した論文を探す必要があるのかを知ることができる。日本語を読むことができない読者にあなたの研究を理解してもらうためには、英語でアブストラクトを書くことが重要である。

1) ***Make sure your Japanese paper is clearly written.***
日本語の論文が明確に書かれているかどうかを確認しよう。

It is very hard to write a good abstract until you have finished your paper. It is easier to write an English abstract for a well-organized paper written in Japanese.
論文を書き終えるまで、良いアブストラクトを書くことはとても難しい。日本語でうまく構造化された論文を書くことができれば、英語でアブストラクトを書くことは容易になる。

2) ***Know how long your abstract should be.***
アブストラクトの長さを確認しよう。

For the college of Policy Science it should be more than 50 words for 1st year paper proposals and 150 words for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year papers. Include a title that is not more than 15 words long.
政策科学部では、1回生は50語以上のリサーチ・プロポーザル、2回生以上は150語程度のアブストラクトを書かなければならない。タイトルも必要だが、15語以内とすること。

3) ***Know what good and bad abstracts look like.***
良いアブストラクトと悪いアブストラクトの違いを知ろう。

Read the many examples in this document.
以下に掲載されている多くの例を見てみよう。

4) ***Writing preparation.***
書く準備をしよう。

Reread your paper, take notes, and write down keywords.
自分の論文を読み直し、ノートを取り、キーワードを書き出そう。

5) ***Write the abstract.***
アブストラクトを書こう。

For 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year report abstracts, write each of the 6 sections listed in the box below. Use the worksheet in this document.
2回生以上は、以下の6つの各項目について書こう。9-10頁のワークシートを使おう。

Background	*What is your general topic?*
Purpose	*What is the question you are trying to answer?*
Literature Review	*What does the previous literature say about the topic?*
Method	*How did you gather your data?*
Results	*What did you find?*
Conclusion	*What is the meaning or importance of what you found?*

背景	全体の主題は何か
目的	明らかにしようとする問いは何か
文献調査	その主題について先行研究はどう述べているか
方法	データをどのように集めたか
結果	何を発見したか
結論	あなたの知見にはどのような意味があり、どう重要なのか

6) *Rewrite the abstract.*
   アブストラクトを読み直そう。

   Take out unnecessary words or add any missing information.
   Check for accuracy. Use English spell check on MS Word!
   不必要な言葉を取り除き、足りないものを書き足そう。
   正確かどうか確認しよう。マイクロソフト・ワードのスペルチェック機能を使おう。

7) *Ask someone else to check your abstract.*
   アブストラクトを他の人に確認してもらおう。

   A classmate, a senior student, a teacher, or come to the **Writing Help Desk.**
   クラスメイトや先輩、教師に確認を頼もう。ライティング・ヘルプデスクを利用しよう。

2. Reference pages

2-1. Good examples of research report abstracts

Example 1: Family Policy in Japan

The sense of crisis in Japan over the falling birth rate has started an active public debate on the issues of gender and family. This article explores the connections between demographic change and societal change. What will the aging society mean for Japanese families? How will elderly people be taken care of? How will middle-aged people take care of their parents and their children at the same time? How will young people earn enough money and independence to start their own families? Literature and media have focused on formal laws and policies that support family rather than the informal practices that make family life more difficult. The researchers interviewed people from a variety of stakeholder groups and backgrounds. Results pointed to a disconnect between the ideal views of the family from mostly older male policy makers and the reality of todays family in Japan. Recommendations to address this deficiency are made. (151 words)

Example 2: The Japanese Employment System

The stagnation of the Japanese economy and the ageing of Japanese society have led to major changes in the Japanese labor market. The purpose of this study is to define these changes and explore Japanese people's feelings about these changes. In the last 20 years there has been considerable literature on aspects of this subject for example: the increase of part-time work, the prevalence of

dispatch companies, and the decline of the family enterprise. In addition current issues such as the changing roles of women, the problems of older workers, immigration, the rise of unemployment, and the changing workplace relationship between workers and management are explored. Data was collected from a series of in-person and online interviews with stakeholders, which were then transcribed, coded and analyzed. The results point to more problems in the future for Japanese society especially related to rising levels of income inequality. (146 words)

2-2. Bad Examples of research report abstracts

Bad example 1: Populism and Democracy

Draft of bad example 1
Democracy is becoming a mere name by populism. After French Revolution, democracy developed as representative with universal suffrage system is performed in a democratic state including the United States, it seemed mature enough. However, people began to lose the concern about politics and pre-modern democracy that elites dominate over minorities has comeback. In a previous research, although expand of the gap in democracy was blame lobbying by corporate elite in neo-liberalism, in this research, I explain a influence of Populism with the problem by set straight a changes and a process of pre-modern democracy. As a member of democratic state, learning the culture about democracy is one of the tasks to choose the right choices. (115 words)

Explanation of bad example 1
"Becoming a mere name" is an understandable but not standard English, *become a mere shell of itself* is better. "Is performed" is not as clear as *developed*. *The previous research* is better than "in a previous research", because research is not countable. *This paper will explain* is better than "in this research, I explain". The 4th sentence is 43 words long and needed to be broken up into several sentences. The conclusion is introduced with *Finally this paper will show* to make it easier to know the author is starting the conclusion.
"Becoming a mere name" という表現は理解できるが、一般的な英語ではない。 "become a mere shell of itself " とする方が良い。 "developed" も"is performed" も明瞭ではない。また、"the previous research" とする方が、"in a previous research" より好ましい。 "research"は数えられないからだ。 "This paper will explain" とする方が、"in this research, I explain" より良い。4 行目は 43 語あり、長い。複数のセンテンスに分ける必要がある。結論には"Finally this paper will show"を挿入しよう。著者の結論がどこに書かれているかをわかりやすく伝えるためだ。

Corrections of bad example 1
Democracy has become a mere shell of itself due to populism. After the French Revolution, representative democracy with universal suffrage developed in many countries including the United States. This brand of democracy seemed mature and functioned well. However people began to lose their interest in politics and elites have come to dominate again. The previous research on this topic blamed this "gap" in democracy on the influence of the corporate elite in the neo-liberal system. Data was gathered through articles found in academic databases and the mass media. In addition interviews with policy science experts form three universities were conducted. This paper will explain the influence of populism in the democratic process and reinterpret events in pre-modern history through the lens of this perspective. Finally this paper will show that members of democratic societies need to learn the culture of democracy in order to fully participate and make the right choices. (151 words**)**

Bad example 2: Reconsidering the Role of Sister City Relationships

Draft of bad example 2
Sister city interchange is the equal ties based on the trust between communities. Its purpose is local mutual development and the international friendship and established that the performed information exchange and traffic of the person beyond the border. In late years some interchange has been canceled by cities, towns, and village having merged. Besides, the voice to doubt the effect breaks out. Now it is necessary to reconsider it how the local government use it. I focus on Sister city interchange of Tokyo in this study. This is because Tokyo has specialty and influence. As a result of investigation I understood the characteristic of the sister city of Tokyo. In take the questionnaire in the local government and intend to push forward a further study in future. (127 words)

Explanation of bad example 2
The first abstract was too short and missed some elements like a literature review, methods, and results. Some sentences like "the voice to doubt the effects breaks out" do not make sense in English and are likely machine translated, write simple sentences in your own words.
最初のアブストラクトは短すぎて、文献調査、方法、結果といった要素が欠けていた。一部のセンテンス（"the voice to doubt the effects breaks out" など）は意味不明な英語であり、機械（自動）翻訳の可能性がある。あなたの言葉でシンプルな文章を書くことを心がけよう。

Corrections of bad example 2
Sister city relationships exist around the world to promote cultural understanding and trade. In recent years some literature in Japan has started to question the utility of these relationships and some programs have been cancelled. It is time to reconsider the advantages and disadvantages of these programs for Japanese cities. Data was first collected through academic databases and popular media sources. Then interviews with local officials in charge of sister city programs were conducted in Tokyo, Yokohama, Kyoto, and Osaka. These four cities have multiple long-term sister city relationships and have special cultural and economic significance in Japan. The researchers found the effects of these programs fall below the expectations of the public. Despite this fact there were very real benefits to the involved cities and these benefits are explored. In addition it was found these programs cost little in terms of money or effort on the part of the Japanese cities. The authors recommend cities continue and expand sister city relationships with appropriate partners. **(**165 words)

2-3. How to write a title for your research report

The title is the first and most read part of any paper.
タイトルはどのようなレポートであっても、ほとんどの人が最初に読み、それゆえもっとも読まれる。

A title summarizes the main idea of your paper in the least amount of words possible. The maximum length of a title is about 15 words but less is better. Subtitles can be used.
タイトルは、できるだけ少ない言葉で論文の主要なアイデアを手短に述べるものである。タイトルの最大語数は約 15 語だが、少ないほうが望ましい。サブタイトルを書くことで、メインタイトルを補足できる。

The title should also catch the reader's attention.
タイトルで読者の関心を引こう。

Examples: Japanese Business

This one is too long:
- The Study of the Merits and Possibilities of the Overseas Expansion Style of Japanese Companies Using the Transaction Cost Approach Theory in China and Vietnam

These are too short:
- Transaction Cost Theory
- Japanese Overseas Expansion

This one is just right
- The Expansion Style of Japanese Companies: The Transaction Cost Approach

More Good Title Examples:

- The Nikkei Identity: The Ever-Changing Identity of the Nikkei in North America
- Competitive Advantage: The Direction of Japan's Industrial Policy
- Kinkakuji Traffic study: Universal Design for Bus Stops and Roads for Travellers
- I am Robot: Future Directions of Japan's Robot Industry
- From Russia with Love: Resolution of the Russo-Japanese Territorial Issue
- Social Networking Advantages: The Case of Japan
- The Effect of Women's Increased Economic Independence on the Marriage Rate in Japan

- Low Voter Turnout in Japan: The Case of Young Men
- Populism and Democracy: The Decline of Democracy in the Modern World
- Smart City Keihanna: How One City Saved its Environment
- Using the Internet to improve the Public Relations of a University: A Case Study

Write your title on the worksheet.
ワークシート（9-10 頁）に研究タイトルを書いてみよう。

2-4. Common example sentences

1. Background
- The major cause of (problem) is (reason).
- (your topic) is an increasingly important area of (general topic).
- A key aspect of (general topic) is (your topic).
- Recently (your topic) has become an important topic in (place).
- (problem) has become important because (reason).
- Many (kind of people) have begun to argue that (problem) is a problem.

2. Purpose
- The purpose of this study is (purpose).
- This paper aims to (goal).
- This essay seeks to (goal).
- This essay examines the solutions to (problem).
- The objective of this research is to (goal).

3. Method
- A 20-question survey was given to 100 people.
- Both surveys and interviews were conducted.
- A case study approach was used.
- In-depth interviews of (people) were conducted.
- (subject/s) was/were observed and notes recorded.
- The researchers used the participant observation method.

4. Literature Review
- The literature so far says (general summary of information).
- There is a lot of literature on (topic 1) but little or no research on (topic 2).
- In recent years there has been an increasing amount of literature on (topic).
- Previous research on this topic says (general summary of information).
- A number of studies have found (general summary of information).

5. Results
- The most interesting result from the data was (result).
- (solution 1) was found to be better than (solution 2).
- The most interesting finding was that (result).
- The consensus among respondents was that (result).
- The results of the (type of analysis) analysis are shown in table 1.

6. Conclusion
- This paper has explained the importance of (topic).
- This study has shown that (conclusion).
- In general it seems that (conclusion).
- The results of this research support the idea that (topic).
- The practical implication of this study is (conclusion).

2-5. Common Mistakes to look out for (and how to fix them)

1) **Frankly speaking**. Use *in fact*, or *actually*.
   X – Frankly speaking this problem is the most important of the three.
   O – In fact this problem is the most important of the three because …

2) **And/So/But to start a sentence.** These are *conjunctions;* they are used to join two simple phrases. Do not use them to start a sentence.
   X – Developed countries have problems. And developing countries have problems.
   O – Developed countries have problems and developing countries have problems.
   O – Developed countries have problems. Developing countries also have problems.

3) **Because to start a sentence**. The word *because* is also a *conjunction*; it connects two phrases. The second phrase explains the first. You may see sentences starting with *because* in English media but do not start a sentence with *because* to make sure you do not make this very common mistake.
   X – The policy is successful. Because policy makers learned the lessons of the past.
   O – The policy is successful because policy makers learned the lessons of the past.

4) **And so on.** Use *and some other … .*
   X – The policy affects the community, the residents, and so on.
   O – The policy affects the community, the residents, and some others.

5) **Especially.** Rarely used at the beginning of sentences.
   X – Especially, this article emphasizes on the following facts.
   O – This article emphasizes on various facts, especially the following facts… or : …
   O – In particular, this article emphasizes on the following facts: … or …

6) **Something wants to …** . People and animals have wants not things.
   X – This research wants to … .
   O – The authors intend to … .
   O – The researchers want to … .

7) **Make a claim.** Rarely used in English the same way that クレーム is.
   X – The customer made a claim.
   O – The customer complained.

8) **It is said that …** . By who? When? Where? This is too general for an academic paper.
   X – It is said that Japanese food is delicious.
   O – 87% of tourists to Japan in the 2009 survey said Japanese food is delicious.
   O – In recent years there have been many references to the high quality of Japanese food in the international press, for example … .

2-6. Editing your research report abstract

After writing your abstract and including all the parts, you must edit it for length and correct the English. See the student abstract examples below:
アブストラクトとその他の部分をすべて書き終えたら、語数を調整し、英語の誤りを正さなければならない。以下に挙げた学生のアブストラクト例を見てみよう。

Example: Japanese Educational Policy

First Draft
Japanese are not good at English. In the league table of TOEIC scores Japan is in a low position. In the present and future Japanese will need English to compete in the world economy. We will study the English education system in Japan and how to fix it. (48 words)

Explanation

The main problem with this abstract is that it is too short and missing a lot of information. We have an idea and background but the purpose is only to "study" which is a little too vague. There is no mention of a review of previous literature, data collection, or results.

このアブストラクトの主な問題は、あまりに短すぎるため、多くの情報が欠けていることである。着想と背景は書いてあるが、目的は「研究する」とあるだけで、やや曖昧すぎる。先行研究の検討、データの収集、研究結果について言及がない。

Second Draft

In Japan we need to be better at English to compete in the 21st century world economy. Many Asian countries are ahead of Japan in TOEFL and TOEIC scores. I think English education in Japan needs to improve to maintain its position as an economic leader in Asia and many Japanese think so too. We interviewed to many people about this issue and collected data. Many people talked about English tests in high school but being afraid to speak, they wondered about being immersed in English in a way that happens during study abroad trips. (95 words)

Explanation

This version is better with a good background section and it introduces the idea of data collection and results. However it still lacks a review of previous literature and the discussion of data and results is still vague.

第2ドラフトは、研究背景がよくなっている。またデータ収集や結果が紹介されている点もよい。しかし、依然、先行研究の検討が欠け、また、データや結果についての議論が曖昧である。

Final Version

Japanese will need English more than ever before in the 21st century, however Japan has lagged behind many of its Asian neighbors in English language achievement. This paper will explain the many mistakes made in the past by policy makers and explore possibilities for change in the future. There is a large body of previous literature about Japan's English education failings such as over reliance on standardized tests and grammar translation. More recently, studies have reported on the positive results of new methods such as communicative language teaching and extensive reading. Data was collected from a survey of 100 people of all ages and interviews of 10 people were done. A common theme of a desire to focus on speaking and listening over grammar and reading was found. A belief that more time spent overseas for study abroad was thought to be one of the solutions. A list of perceived past problems and proposed solutions will be presented. The results reflect not only teachers' views but also students and regular citizens. (172 words)

Explanation

This version is a little long at 172 words but it covers all the required sections. A review of previous literature is added in this version and more specific information about the data collection and the results. In addition there is also a mention of how the author will conclude the paper.

最終版のアブストラクトは、172words と少し長いが、必要とされるアブストラクトの要素をすべて満たしている。先行研究の検討は、この最終版で追加され、データ収集やデータ結果についてより具体的な情報も付け加えられた。さらに著者は問題解決について言及することで、本論を締めくくっている。

Last step: Ask someone for feedback on each of your draft, if possible. You should give your final draft to someone else to check. It is common for students to skip this last step. This results in many unnecessary mistakes. Don't forget to do this last step before you hand in your abstract.

最終ステップ: できれば、ドラフトごとに誰かにチェックしてもらおう。それが難しい場合も、最終版のドラフトは必ず誰かにチェックしてもらおう。学生は、他人にチェックしてもらうという最後のステップを省略しがちである。だから、誰かに見てもらえば修正できたはずの多くの誤りが残ったまま、アブストラクトを提出してしまうことになる。提出する前に必ず誰かに読んでもらおう。

3. Research Report Abstract Worksheet

Write the information from your paper for each section in Japanese and then English to help you clarify your ideas for yourself and your editor.

Title

Japanese_____

English_____

Background

Japanese_____

_____

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English_____

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Purpose

Japanese_____

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English_____

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Literature Review

Japanese_____

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English_____

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Method

Japanese_____

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English_____

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Results

Japanese_____

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English_____

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Conclusion

Japanese_____

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English_____

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