



# How to Write a SESUG Abstract

By definition, an abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work. For conference presentation purposes, it promotes interest in your work. What you want to do with your abstract is describe what will be included in your presentation/paper, the scope, products used, and effectiveness or value. The language style of an abstract does not have to be formal but should match the language style of the complete paper.

Although there is always room for creativity, your abstract should include, at a minimum, a few sentences that cover the following four items:

- **Why your topic is important or interesting;**
- **How you approached this topic (include procedures, modules, customizations);**
- **A description of the output or results;**
- **Implications for user community.**

I have color coded these items and provided color coded examples below (from Daniel O'Connor, SAS Institute, 'SAS® Graphics on ODS 9.2 Performance-Enhancing Steroids', SESUG 2008; and Maribeth Johnson, Medical College of Georgia, 'The Effect of Missing Data on Repeated Measures Models', SESUG 2009).

**In the midst of performance-enhancing drug scandals in professional sports, you would think that SAS® graphics on ODS 9.2 performance-enhancing steroids would be a bad thing. That is until you experienced the ability to customize professional-looking graphics in seconds with a variety of appearances. ODS graphical style enhancements provide advanced capabilities to unleash your creativity without spending endless hours manipulating options. Choose from a list of predefined styles, or create your own to match your corporate theme. ODS styles are both customizable and extendable, and they provide a powerful way to bring your content to life. Explore these new features in HTML, PDF, RTF, and PostScript documents. Astonish your customers and amaze yourself with SAS® 9.2 ODS enhancements for SAS graphics.**

**Researchers involved with longitudinal studies are faced with the problem of trying to get study subjects to return for every follow-up visit. There is always some amount of missing data when looking at these types of studies. The MIXED procedure of the SAS® enables examination of correlational structures and variability changes between repeated measurements on experimental units across time. While PROC MIXED has the capacity to handle unbalanced data when the data are missing at random, a question arises as to when the degree of sparseness jeopardizes inference. Simulation is a tool that can be used to answer these types of questions. This paper shows the application of simulation to determine inference problems in a data set with a specific pattern of missing data. This technique is also applied to the topic of initial sample size determination.**

Other considerations:

- ✓ Compare your abstract to the word count limits and make sure yours falls within the required range. SESUG abstracts must be between 50 and 250 words.
- ✓ Make sure your abstract includes any terms that you would consider keywords for your paper/presentation.
- ✓ Include appropriate trademark and copyright symbols.
- ✓ Keep your abstract positive and confident. Words like 'might', 'seem like', 'perhaps', 'could' suggest a lack of confidence.
- ✓ Avoid jargon and abbreviations that are not commonly understood.
- ✓ If not intended for general users, include information about audience level or segment.
- ✓ Read your abstract out loud. This will give you a better sense of how it will be read by others.
- ✓ Spell and grammar check your abstract before submission.

Writing an efficient abstract is not always easy, but taking the time to do so will result in better understanding of your topic, increased interest, and an increased likelihood of paper acceptance. Make sure that all the components of a good abstract are included in the next one you write.