# Tip Sheet: Chemistry Lab Abstracts

**CWAC: Center for Writing Across the Curriculum, Spring 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIENCE</th>
<th>● Reader is informed - as much or more so than you.</th>
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| PURPOSE  | ● Give the reader an overview of the objective, procedures, and results of your experiment.  
● Summarize the major conclusions from your work in the lab.  
● Note: the purpose is not to discuss how much you learned. |
| TONE/VOICE | ● Scientific  
  ○ past tense  
  ○ 3rd person  
  ○ mostly Passive Voice  
● Scientific terminology |
| STRUCTURE | ● Abstracts follow this order:  
  ○ Title  
  ○ Objective (purpose)  
  ○ Methodology: what did you do? using which procedures? applying which Chemistry principles?  
  ○ Results: What did you find?  
  ○ Discussion: Why is this important? |
| RESEARCH/SOURCES | ● Most of your information will come from data you collected and recorded in your lab notebook.  
● You will probably not need any information from an outside source in the abstract. But if you do, include an in-text citation. |
| STYLE/CITATION | ● One-inch margins  
● 1 page maximum  
● Double-spaced  
● Size 12 font  
● Times New Roman  
● ACS (American Chemical Society) guidelines  
● Note: Most abstracts do not require sources, but a complete lab report will need a References page at the end. |
| WRITING RESOURCES | ● via the CWAC website:  
  ○ *Writing in Chemistry: Lab Abstracts*, CWAC PowerPoint  
  ○ *Sentence Structure for Scientific Writing*, handout by Saint Mary’s Department of Chemistry  
  ○ This Tip Sheet  
  ○ *Peer Review via Post-Outlining: Exploring the Chemistry Lab Abstract*, CWAC handout |

*Created by: Lead Writing Adviser Madeline Bell; last edited Feb. 2015*