Plan for the workshop

- Defining an “abstract”
- Key Elements
- Nuts and Bolts
- Examples
- Assessing Abstracts using a rubric
WHAT IS AN ABSTRACT?
Abstract, defined

- Summary communicating the central ideas of an argument or project
- Widely used in academic and professional life to provide a short preview of a research paper
- Similar to a Movie Trailer
Example


Abstract: This article focuses on the visually-rendered components of an argument. I am interested in the conditions that must be fulfilled for visuals to successfully perform an argumentative function. I am trying to find out which aspects of an argument are amenable to visualization, if it is only the factual aspects that can be effectively captured in a visual? What about abstract claims? Are visuals not capable of providing support for them? In the attempt to answer these questions, I delineate two types of arguments that may be supported by visual material and try to show the differences and the similarities between their argumentative regimes. Although the concept of visual argument is not uncontroversial, I do not intend to make a new contribution to the twenty-year debate surrounding the question whether there are any visual arguments. My wish is to build on the literature that is already established in the field, with the hope of taking further our understanding of the argumentative action that visuals may perform. My approach is inspired by the authors who believe that visuals can participate substantially in the creation of a well-developed argument, by providing reasons in support of claims. To do this successfully, they usually need words in their immediate closeness, but their action is not reducible to that of the surrounding words. Most of the times, they function as distinct components of hybrid arguments (as Anthony Blair suggests)—those arguments that are composed of visuals and words. Going with the general trend in argumentation studies, I use the term visual arguments to refer to the visually-rendered components of hybrid arguments. [ABSTRACT FROM AUTHOR]
KEY ELEMENTS
5 Key Elements of an Abstract

1. Motivation
2. Problem statement
3. Approach
4. Results
5. Conclusions
1) Motivation

Why do we care about the problem and the results?

This section should include the importance of your work, the difficulty of the area, and the impact it might have if successful.
2) Problem statement

What *problem* are you trying to solve?
What is the *scope* of your work (a generalized approach, or for a specific situation)?
Be careful not to use too much jargon.

“Although the concept of visual argument is not uncontroversial .... My wish is to build on the literature ... with the hope of taking further our understanding of the argumentative action that visuals may perform.”
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5) Conclusions

What are the implications of your answer?

Are your results general or specific to a particular case?

"Most of the times, they function as distinct components of hybrid arguments (as Anthony Blair suggests; those arguments that are composed of visuals and words."
NUTS AND BOLTS
Nuts and Bolts

- **Word Count**
  - Meet the word count limitation.
  - An abstract word limit of 250 to 400 words is common.

- **Be Honest**
  - Any major restrictions or limitations on the results should be stated.
  - Include qualifiers like "might", "could", "may", and "seem" if necessary.

- **Works Cited**
  - Include any sources referenced in the Abstract, and any major works not referenced

- **Revise, Revise, Revise**
  - Avoid waiting until the last moment.

- **Come see me!**
EXAMPLES
Different Parts of the Research Process

- Proposal = Poster
- Abstract = Trailer
- Paper = Movie
Less effective: **Behind the Scenes at the Zoo:** In this presentation, I will talk about what I learned about animal behavior from a recent trip to the Los Angeles Zoo.

More effective: **Behind the Scenes at the Zoo:** While captivity can impede animals’ natural behaviors and create behavioral disorders, properly structured zoo environments can effectively stimulate species-appropriate behavior and mitigate animals’ stress.
The use of alternative textile materials and the observance of Church doctrines and dress codes in medieval Western Europe reveal emergent egalitarian ideologies despite restrictions placed by the upper class. According to anthropologist Thorsten Veblen’s theory of pecuniary emulation, the wealthy obtain power over the poor through the evidence of their wealth. Those with access to silks and dyes, the evidence of wealth in the Middle Ages, had the proof of power.

Through power of possessions, the wealthy of medieval Western Europe demonstrated a seemingly accepted authority over the lower classes. The upper class had dominated the textile trade through the barrier of high cost and also enacted sumptuary laws to retain exclusivity in the market. Despite these devices, the introduction of alternative textiles and cheaper dyes from local ingredients allowed the poor to acquire luxuries similar to the ruling class, therefore diminishing their authority and revealing strains of egalitarianism. For example, using a hue of purple created from madder, an inexpensive plant native to Western Europe (Jacoby 211) allowed them to circumvent sumptuary laws restricting royal Murex purple.

Although some religious houses moved toward ornamentation and luxury, affording nobles the power of emulation, early Christian doctrine and simpler monastic dress codes combated this because of poverty’s role in the gospels. In their veneration of poverty as virtue (Tuttle 91), the Franciscan order in particular reversed the Veblenian theory by emulating those without means, instead of those with means, through their voluntary poverty, thus providing growing egalitarianism in the medieval Europe. (Word Count: 249)

Works Cited


ASSESSING ABSTRACTS USING A RUBRIC
You are the reviewer…

- Imagine it is your job to review 100 abstracts submitted for a research conference and you have been asked to grade abstracts on the following scale:
  - 5 = Amazing
  - 4 = OK
  - 3 = Needs Improvement

- Working with a partner, assess the sample abstract
- You have 5 minutes…
- You can then share the abstract and the score