Guidelines for Writing your Abstract

What is the purpose of the abstract?

The abstract should be a brief, yet comprehensive synopsis of the research project. It should seek to highlight the research question(s), experimental procedures, data, and conclusions in a way that is concise and easy to understand. Judges read the abstract for a quick overview of the research design and findings.

Rules for completion:

The abstract should be 250 words or less. Do not discuss specific aspects of the research in great detail, including experimental procedures and statistical methods. Any information that is unnecessary to include in a brief explanation should be saved for the project exhibit board.

If the project is a continuation from a previous year, the abstract should summarize the current year's work only. If mention of supporting research from previous year(s) is necessary, it must be minimal.

If the abstract text includes special characters, such as mathematical symbols, which won't be translated electronically, please spell out the symbol.

Do not include acknowledgements in the abstract. This includes any references to mentors, institutional facilities, and awards or patents received.

Many regional and state fairs use the Regeneron ISEF Official Abstract Form, which can be found here. The ISEF form is only required for the high school participants of the Beal Bank USA Southern Nevada Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Middle and elementary school participants can create their abstract on their own or use the official form if they would like to.

What should the abstract include?

Title

Finalist's Name (or names, if a team project)

School Name, City and State

Purpose

- An introductory statement providing background, namely the reason, for investigating the project topic.
- A statement of the problem the research is looking to solve or the questions being tested.

Procedure

- A brief overview of how the investigation was conducted, highlighting key points, and including methods and resources used.
- Do not provide details about materials used in the research unless they greatly influenced the procedure or were needed to conduct the investigation.
- An abstract should only include procedures done by the student. Do not include work done by a mentor or work done prior to the student's involvement.

Observations/Data/Results

- This section should provide key results that lead directly to the conclusions you have drawn.
- Do not include unnecessary data or observations about the results, nor tables, charts, graphs or other images. While these belong in a research paper or on the project board, they do not belong in the formal abstract.
- Unless significant, do not include any of the experimental design difficulties encountered in research.

Conclusions

- This section should be confined to a short summary in 1-2 sentences. It is a reflection on the research process and results, which may include conclusive ideas, important applications, and implications of the research.
- The Regeneron ISEF abstract does not include a bibliography. The Regeneron ISEF requires the bibliography as part of the research plan to be provided on Form 1A (not applicable for middle/elementary projects).

Information adapted from
https://www.societyforscience.org/isef/how-to-write-an-isef-abstract/