Strategies for Writing an Abstract

What is an Abstract?
It is a succinct (typically about 200 words, but always check expectations) summary of the research that you have conducted or will conduct. As such it should outline the research problem, its significance, the methods used, the results obtained (or expected) and the significance of the results. The work outlined should be novel and should not have been previously presented at any other conference or published anywhere. The abstract can describe work which is in progress at the time the abstract is submitted if the work will be completed at the time at which it will be presented.

Title: Title should match paper, poster or presentation. It should be descriptive and function as a "hook" for readers.

Ghost Abstract Outline:
1) Establish the **purpose, reason, or problem** for the research/scholarly project.
   Why should we care about the issue? What gap in the research/field is this project filling?
   -Describe location in the scholarly discussion within the discipline/field.

2) Describe the **methodology** used in directing construction of the project.
   How did you do the work?
   -Explain **process(es)** used, **techniques** (sciences) and/or **sources** (humanities)
   - Use **key words and phrases** to describe main points of support and/or areas of inquiry for the project.
   -Use **careful mix of lay and field terms**.

3) Discuss the **result**(s) or **finding**(s) of the project-- or anticipated results if project is not yet complete.
   What were the results? What did you learn?
   -Results can be experimental or theoretical, depending on project.
   -Highlight anything new and groundbreaking.
   -Mention any limitations (e.g., sample size)

4) Draw **conclusion**(s) and/or **new perspective** gained from completion of the project.
   What do the results mean? What are the larger implications of the research within the specific discipline/field?
   -Use project claim/thesis/argument as the basis.
   -Include next steps, if relevant

General Abstract Guidelines and Suggestions
- Generally run between 100-300 words, consisting of a single concise paragraph that can stand alone.
- You may be asked to submit keywords with the abstract
- Tend to use active voice and formal language (e.g. avoid contractions).
- Usually use 3rd person
- Avoid excessive use of discipline-specific jargon or unexplained acronyms
- Usually avoid specific references to other articles.
- Consider the audience
- Talk with someone in your discipline to learn about rules specific to your field.
- Follow submission instructions! Proposals are often rejected if guidelines for word count or font are not followed.
- Most titles and abstracts cannot be edited after submitting, so spend time proofreading and editing!
  - Read aloud.
  - Have a friend outside of the research group read it and explain it back to you.