

## 5 Five Abstract Writing Tips

Abstract submittals represent a first step toward publicizing your work and building name recognition within the coastal community. A well-developed abstract starts the process off on the right foot. Use the following tips to get a jump on the competition for presenting/publishing your work.

### 1) Follow the instructions ...

Seems simple, but you would be surprised how often authors mess up the simplest directions. Read the directions carefully, highlight or take notes on specifics, and then FOLLOW THEM! If they ask for only one page, submit one page. If they specify a particular font, submit that font. And on and on ...

### 2) Be concise ...

“The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.” Thomas Jefferson. ‘Nuff said. 😊

### 3) Write in active voice ...

In active voice, the subject does the action. The “doer” can be difficult to determine in passive construction. Reviewers tend to appreciate abstracts written in active voice due to the improved clarity. Spend time working on your grammar and make conscious decisions to implement active voice elements into your writing.

Example:

“The teacher always answers the students’ questions.” (active)

“The students’ questions are always answered by the teacher.” (passive)

For more examples visit:

<http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-active-and-passive-voice.html>

### 4) Make your figures count ...

If the instructions allow (see tip #1 above), include a well thought out figure to highlight a particular point of your abstract. Maps should have north arrows, scales, and legends. Graphs should have succinct titles and axis labels. Impactful figures are a balance between sufficient details to drive your point home versus over-complicated, busy presentation. Keep in mind how the size of the figure on the printed page affects clarity.

### 5) Edit, edit, edit ...

Write your first draft, then come back to it again and again. Tweak your organization, look for places to be more concise, and ask colleagues for their input. Be ruthless in following the tips above to improve your chances at developing a no-brainer abstract acceptable to conferences and journals.