Science fair abstract examples for 7th grade and up (under 250 words)

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Two full science fair abstract examples for middle school, the four parts in order, the 250-word limit as ISEF states it, and a weak abstract fixed line by line.

A science fair abstract is one paragraph of 250 words or fewer that says, in order, why you did the project, what you did, what you found and what it means. That limit is the one Society for Science sets for the international fair: its page "How to Write a Regeneron ISEF Abstract" says "The abstract should be 250 words or less" (read 31 October 2026). Middle-school fairs often borrow it, and some set a shorter one, so read your own fair's sheet first. Two full examples are below, both written from Peabody projects.

I built Peabody's report and abstract builder so a 7th or 8th grader can make an abstract from their own project and their own numbers by picking one sentence shape for each part, with no typing and no AI. It never lets the paragraph run past 250 words. Here's what goes in one, and what to leave out.

The four parts, in order

Society for Science's page lists what an ISEF abstract covers. In plain words:

1. Purpose. The question, why it's interesting, and the hypothesis.
2. Procedure. What you changed, what you measured, what you kept the same, and how many tries. A short overview, not every step.
3. Results. The numbers that lead to the answer: usually the mean at each level.
4. Conclusion. One or two sentences: was the hypothesis right, and what would you test next.

The same page says what stays out: no acknowledgements, no tables, charts, graphs or pictures, no bibliography, and only the work the student did themselves. The table and the graph belong on the board; the abstract says what they show.

Example 1: a pendulum, 7th grade

From the project Does a longer string swing slower? (4th–8th grade). The numbers are made up for the example, but they're close to what a real pendulum does.

Pendulum clocks keep time with a swinging weight, so I wanted to find out if changing the length of the string changes how many swings a pendulum makes in 15 seconds. I thought a longer string would make fewer swings, because the weight has farther to travel on each one. I tested strings 20 cm, 40 cm and 60 cm long. I kept the same weight on the end, let go from the same distance out to the side, and counted for the same 15 seconds each time. I did 3 tries at each length. The mean was 16.7

swings at 20 cm, 11.7 swings at 40 cm and 9.3 swings at 60 cm. As the string got longer, the number of swings went down. My hypothesis was right: tripling the length cut the swings by almost half. Next I would keep the string at 40 cm and hang 3, 5 and 8 pennies, to see whether the weight changes the count.

That's 162 words. Every number in it is in the table on the board, and the last sentence is the project's own "going further" test.

Example 2: salty water, 8th grade

From Does salty water take longer to freeze? (4th–8th grade). The project checks the cups every 30 minutes and stops at 240, so the made-up means here sit on that clock.

People put salt on icy roads, so I wanted to find out if salt changes how long water takes to freeze. I thought more salt would make the water take longer to freeze, because the salt would get in the way of the water turning into ice. I froze a quarter cup of tap water with no salt, a quarter teaspoon, half a teaspoon and 1 teaspoon of salt, three cups of each. Every cup was the same kind, held the same amount of water, and sat in the same part of the freezer, all started together. Every 30 minutes I pressed a spoon into each cup to see if it was frozen all the way through. The mean times were 150 minutes with no salt, 160 with a quarter teaspoon, 190 with half a teaspoon and 230 with 1 teaspoon. My hypothesis was right: each extra amount of salt made the water take longer to freeze. Checking only every 30 minutes means my times could be up to half an hour late. Next I would swap the salt for sugar, spoon for spoon, and draw both lines on one graph.

That's 191 words. Notice the second-to-last sentence: it says what might have made the numbers less exact. Judges at older grades look for that.

A weak abstract, fixed

My project is about parachutes. I made three parachutes and dropped them. It was really fun and my dad helped me a lot. The big one was the best. I learned that air is important.

What's missing, part by part:

- No question. "About parachutes" is a topic. The project's question is Does a bigger parachute fall slower?
- No hypothesis, and no because.
- No procedure a reader could repeat. Which sizes (20, 30 and 40 cm square)? What was timed? What stayed the same (the same weight underneath, the same drop height, the same length of string)?
- No numbers. "The best" isn't a result. The mean fall time at each size is.
- A thank-you. Society for Science's page says acknowledgements don't go in the abstract. Dad can be thanked out loud.

Try tonight

No project kept on Peabody? The abstract builder at the top of this page works for any project: four taps (what was changed, what was measured, what happened, and whether the hypothesis held) and it lays out the four parts with a blank for every word and number that has to come from your child. It prints with lines underneath for the rewrite in their own words.

If your child has a Peabody project kept, open the report builder. For a project whose grades reach 7th (66 of Peabody's 115 do), it builds the abstract from the same picks as the report: the question and hypothesis, what was changed and kept the same, the means from the tries they put in the Graph Maker, and the conclusion. Where a number isn't in the table yet, it leaves a line to fill in by hand. The because is always theirs to write.

Questions grown-ups ask

Does a 5th grader need an abstract?

Usually not. Elementary fairs rarely ask for one, and Peabody only offers it for projects that reach 7th grade. A 5th grader's conclusion paragraph does the same job.

Does the title count toward the 250 words?

Society for Science's page lists the title as part of the abstract form but doesn't say whether it counts. Peabody counts only the paragraph. Ask your fair if you're close to the limit.

Can we use an abstract generator?

The abstract has to be the student's own work, and Peabody's builder only offers sentence shapes filled from the child's own project and numbers. A paragraph written by someone or something else won't hold up when a judge asks about it.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is free through the end of 2026, with no ads and no sign-up. The library has free stories by reading level, up to 8th grade.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/science-fair-abstract-examples