

Article Abstract Writing Assignment

(6% of course grade – 36 marks)

PURPOSE

1. *Short-term*: To develop critical reading and analysis skills you will need in all courses, and that will help you to write the op-ed assignment(s) later in the course.
2. *Long-term*: Your role as an informed citizen involves making sound judgments and decisions about economic issues that matter to you and your community, and communicating your views effectively to others in the form of reasoned arguments. This assignment will help prepare you for that role.

TASKS

1. Read the sample article from *The Economist*, “A fare shake,” then watch the video *How To Read Critically*.
2. Watch the video *How to (Re-)Write an Abstract*. There is also a print version with a few more details, and a print document of *Sample Abstract Processes* for drafting, revising, and editing an abstract.
3. Choose one article from the list of approved articles from *The Economist* (a popular and credible periodical that covers current events and economic issues in an informed yet accessible way).
4. Write your abstract
 - Complete the Draft/Revise/Edit stages for your abstract (see “How To (Re-)Write an Abstract”) of your chosen article and submit your Draft 4 (only) to peerScholar by the 1st deadline.
 - Provide feedback to classmates about their abstracts by the 2nd deadline.
 - Incorporate your classmates’ feedback and submit a final draft to peerScholar and turnitin.com by the 3rd deadline.

FORMAT

- Title format: *Abstract of “insert article title here”*
- Your abstract must be **250-300 words** (not including title) or you will lose marks.
- Include right after your abstract a word count in parentheses, e.g. “(290 words).”
- Submit your assignment to peerScholar on Blackboard by copying and pasting into a text box.

AUDIENCE

Your audience is the general public. Assume your audience has some education and background in current affairs and understands basic economic concepts, but is not knowledgeable about the details of economic theory or policy. In other words, you’ll need to explain any economic concepts you address in a way that keeps their interest and respects their intelligence. Your audience is *not* the professor or the TAs. You need to write more like a journalist than an academic.

DUE DATES & SUBMISSION STEPS

1. 1st Deadline — **25 November 2017 (Saturday)** — Submit the 1st draft of your abstract to peerScholar on Blackboard for ECO105Y. Your draft must be complete and written in full sentences. **You lose marks for submitting an outline or point form draft. No pictures/graphs can be included.** All words.

Copy and paste your draft into the text box in the CREATE step of peerScholar, including: 1) The title – *Abstract of “insert article title here”*, 2) Your abstract (with word count -- not including title -- in parentheses at end). Save a copy

If you submit by this deadline, you are eligible to earn up to 6 marks for assessing your peers' abstracts. **If you miss this deadline, you will miss the assessments in 2) and so lose the 7 marks** for assessments. You also lose the benefit of getting feedback from classmates that might improve your final draft.

2. 2nd Deadline — **2 December 2017 (Saturday)**— Submit three assessments of your fellow students' abstracts in peerScholar. For each, give: a Rating (out of 5 stars); an Overall Rating paragraph; List 1 thing done well; List 1 thing needing improvement. You can also comment on specific sections of your peer's assignment using the Highlight and Comment feature.

If you submit by this deadline, you receive a **maximum of 7 marks**, according to this grading **Rubric for Assessment:**

- 7 Strengths and weaknesses for each assigned abstract, with specifics
- 5 Fair attempt but weak, lacking specifics
- 2 No real effort
- 0 Missed 25 November 2017 deadline, or did not attempt assessments

3. 3rd Deadline — **9 December 2017 (Saturday)** — Submit the final draft of your abstract. Final draft must be submitted both to peerScholar on BlackBoard and turnitin. If you submit by this deadline, you receive a **maximum of 29 marks** for the final draft. **If you miss this deadline you lose all 29 marks.**

EVALUATION

The final draft of your abstract will be evaluated on:

- How well you explain the main argument and supporting evidence of your chosen article.
- The structure, clarity and conciseness of your writing.
- Your participation in the peer assessment process (7 of the 36 marks).

For writing assignments, letter grades are preferable to numeric grades (0-100%), as it is impossible to discriminate that finely. But since we must integrate your grade on this assignment with your other numerical scores, your abstract score will be based on the marks you earn in each category of the rubric below, plus your marks for peer feedback (7, 5, 2, or 0). You will receive a numerical mark (for Excellent, Good, Competent, Problematic) in each category, which will be added to get a score out of 36 marks. For example, if you earn the top (Excellent) score in each category, your score will be (17+5+4+7 (peer feedback) = 33/36 = 92%. If you earn the second (Good) score in each category, your score will be (14+4+3+5 (peer feedback) = 26/36 = 73%. With the lowest score in each category, your score will be (10+1+1+2 (peer feedback)) = 14/36 = 39%. Most students will earn combinations of marks that will total in the range between 39% and 92%. If you are conscientious about doing assessments and get those 7 marks for effort, the lowest your total score could be would be (10+1+1+7 (assessment) =) 19/36 = 53%.

	Excellent	Good	Competent	Problematic	Pts
Main argument & economic reasoning 17 Very clear, coherent explanation of main argument and key economic reasoning. All key points and supporting evidence included; no irrelevant information.	14 Fairly clear, coherent explanation of main argument and key economic reasoning. Most key points and evidence included; little irrelevant information.	12 Summary of main argument and explanation of key economic reasoning could be clearer. Some key points and evidence included; some irrelevant information.	10 Problems summarizing main argument and explaining key economic reasoning. Missing relevant evidence; much irrelevant information.	18	
Structure 5 Logical order of ideas. Excellent paragraph structure (very clear topic sentence & one main idea per paragraph).	4 Mostly logical order of ideas. Good paragraph structure (fairly clear topic sentence & mostly one main idea per paragraph).	3 Somewhat logical order of ideas. OK paragraph structure (topic sentence and attempt to structure each paragraph focused on one main idea).	1 Confusing order of ideas. Illogical or inconsistent paragraph structure (confusing or missing topic sentences and paragraphs no clear focus).	6	
Quality of writing 4 Pleasure to read. Writing enhances understanding and interest. Clear, correct, concise sentences with active voice. Very few errors and none that impede meaning.	3 Mostly easy to read. Mostly clear, correct, concise sentences with active voice. A few errors that slightly impede meaning, if at all.	2 Some problems with clarity, concision, and correctness at the sentence level. Some passive voice and/or jargon. Some errors that impede meaning.	1 Many problems with clarity, concision, and correctness at the sentence level. Considerable passive voice and/or jargon. Many errors that impede meaning.	5	
				Total	29