Abstract or executive summary: This is the last thing that you will write, but it is the first thing that readers will see. You need to write a one to two paragraph abstract of your paper – describe the topic, cite some statistics, summarize what you have found. This should read like abstracts of articles that you find in journals. You write it last because it needs to summarize your entire paper. Then you put it first, right after the title page.

Introduction: This usually contains two or three paragraphs. A good introduction catches the reader's attention, states the public health problem or issue in interesting terms, uses some (cited) statistics to back up the reason this problem should be researched, and leads into the major definitional terms.

Definitional terms: This can be short or long, depending on how many terms are involved. For instance, if I am writing about infant mortality, I would want to define infant mortality rate as number of deaths in the first year of life per 1,000 live births. I might also define such terms as premature, low birth weight, small for gestational age, prenatal care, stillbirths, perinatal mortality, APGAR score, surfactant therapy, neonatal mortality and postneonatal mortality.   All of these definitions will help the reader to understand the paper. Even though most readers of professional journals are familiar with public health terms, the area is so broad and specialized that it helps to define terms in advance. One way of doing this is to have a paragraph or two in the beginning. Another way is to define each term as you introduce it. For instance, you might want to define infant mortality, neonatal mortality, postneonatal mortality, and perinatal mortality in the first paragraph after the introduction. Then as you introduce each of the other specialized terms, you need to define each of them.

Literature review: Take the information from the articles you have abstracted and arrange it in some type of order of your choosing, for example:

- Sequentially – review each article briefly.

- By type of article – conceptual, empirical, theoretical, etc.

- By independent variables – e.g., prematurity, low birth weight, lack of prenatal care, low educational level, low income, teenaged pregnancy, no health insurance.

This is the meat of the paper. It should be 6 to 8 pages long. You will want to describe all that you have read. Discuss the historical facts about the problem area. Point out the most important independent variables (suspected causes) in this problem area. Discuss the types of solutions that have been discovered and how well they have worked. Describe the studies that have been done and comment on them. If there are controversies or differences of opinion in the field about the origins of the problem or about the solutions, discuss these two.

Summary and discussion: This is a brief (one to two pages) recap of what you have covered in the literature review. In this section, you will summarize the main facts you have uncovered and discuss the implications. You will also need to make some public health policy or practice recommendations. For instance, you might conclude that comprehensive one-stop clinics and outreach programs like the one in Hinds County in Mississippi are the best approach to lowering infant mortality rates. Or you may recommend health education or a new type of clinical test for rural health clinics. This will differ for different topic areas.

Important Notes on Style:

1. There should be a title page with no page number and an abstract page with no page number.

2. All other pages should be numbered.

3. Total pages, <u>not including</u> references, abstract and title page should be 9-12.