
GEMINI'S SUGGESTION OF A SHORTENING OF AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED TO THE SWEDISH
CONGRESS OF PHILOSOPHY 2026

(For the prompt, it is in the last part of this document.)

The Swedish congress of philosophy 2026 required a 100-word shortening of our submitted (127-word) abstract. If we did not provide a 100-word shortening then they would let AI do it for us. While I had no problem shortening the abstract without the help of AI, I was curious to see what that could have resulted in. Turns out the result could have been very bad, which I found curious and unexpected. Thus this document.

ORIGINAL ABSTRACT

TITLE:

On Caesar=0

AUTHORS:

Eric Johannesson (eric@ericjohannesson.com)

Anders E.V. Lundstedt (a@anderslundstedt.se)

Frege found it problematic that his logicist project did not rule out the identification of Caesar with the number zero. Since the logicist project---together with its later reincarnations---must be given up on, the problem in its original formulation is no longer of interest. We nevertheless treat the question 'Is Caesar=0?'. We show the perhaps surprising result that it is perfectly consistent with our best scientific theories that Caesar=0. More generally, we show that any "abstract object" may be identified with a space-time object; furthermore, the number of abstracts objects that may be simultaneously identified with space-time objects is equal to the cardinality of the set of space-time objects. Our findings are not only curiosities---for example, to some extent they may allow for a nominalistic theory of the world.

MY SHORTENED ABSTRACT

Frege found it problematic that his logicist project did not rule out the identification of Caesar with the number zero. Since the logicist project must be given up on, the problem in its original formulation is no longer of interest. We nevertheless treat the question 'Is Caesar=0?'. We show the perhaps surprising result that it is perfectly consistent with our best scientific

theories that Caesar=0. More generally, we show that any “abstract object” may be identified with a space-time object. Our findings are not only curiosities---for example, to some extent they may allow for a nominalistic theory of the world.

GEMINI'S SUGGESTION

A "Tightened" Alternative (75 Words)

If you want to make the text feel less like a "trimmed" version and more like a cohesive short abstract, you could try a version like this:

Frege's logicism famously failed to rule out identifying Julius Caesar with the number zero. While the original logicist project is defunct, we revisit the question "Is Caesar = 0?" and demonstrate that identifying abstract objects with space-time objects is entirely consistent with modern scientific theories. Beyond being a mere curiosity, our finding that any abstract object can be mapped to a physical one offers a potential foundation for a nominalistic theory of the world.

Feature	Your Shortened Version	Suggested "Tight" Version
Word Count	88 words	75 words
Tone	Academic/Formal	Direct/Punchy
Focus	Direct cuts from original	Synthesis of ideas

Overall, your version is perfectly functional and accurate. You avoided the common mistake of cutting the conclusion, which is often the most important part of an abstract!

MY COMMENTS

- I find AI to be very useful in many cases, but in this case I was surprised by how poorly Gemini performed. Gemini performed remarkably poorly---in fact, its performance was worse than poor, since it changed the meaning of the original abstract.
- While the writing is bad, and the style inappropriate for an abstract for a conference presentation, there are two main grave mistakes.
- The first grave mistake is in

“... any abstract object can be mapped to a physical one ...”

The mistake is that 'mapped' does not mean the same as 'identified', which thus erroneously represents our findings.

- The second grave mistake is omitting any reformulation of the central point

"... it is perfectly consistent with our best scientific theories that Caesar=0."

Gemini leaves this point for the reader to infer from

"... identifying abstract objects with space-time objects is entirely consistent with modern scientific theories."

This is especially ironic given Gemini's concluding comment:

"You avoided the common mistake of cutting the conclusion, which is often the most important part of an abstract!"

I do not believe this is a common mistake, but at least Gemini made it.

- The very much meaning-conveying scare quotes around 'abstract object' are missing.
- Gemini changes 'our best scientific theories' to 'modern scientific theories' in:

"... identifying abstract objects with space-time objects is entirely consistent with modern scientific theories."

This choice removes important information.

- In

"... is defunct",

'defunct' is a catastrophic choice.

- In

"... demonstrate that identifying abstract ...",

the original 'show' would be better Gemini's 'demonstrate'.

- Overall, Gemini's version has signs of influence from bad writing advice. In particular:
 - the use of extravagant words;
 - the unnecessary (attempted) use of synonyms, which is not only silly but in this case also changes the original meaning, and causes loss of clarity and

precision.

- "Direct/Punchy" is absolutely not appropriate for an academic abstract. I did not include in my prompt that the context was an abstract for an academic conference, but I would have expected Gemini to infer that.
- Actually Gemini's suggestion is 74 words.
- Actually my shortened version is exactly 100 words (which in a separate prompt Gemini got right).

PROMPT

Here follows two texts. The second one is a shorter version of the first. The second text was needed to write because a shorter version, limited to 100 words, of the first txt was requested. Do you have any comments on how I made a shorter version of the first text?

Frege found it problematic that his logicist project did not rule out the identification of Caesar with the number zero. Since the logicist project---together with its later reincarnations---must be given up on, the problem in its original formulation is no longer of interest. We nevertheless treat the question 'Is Caesar=0?'. We show the perhaps surprising result that it is perfectly consistent with our best scientific theories that Caesar=0. More generally, we show that any "abstract object" may be identified with a space-time object; furthermore, the number of abstracts objects that may be simultaneously identified with space-time objects is equal to the cardinality of the set of space-time objects. Our findings are not only curiosities---for example, to some extent they may allow for a nominalistic theory of the world.

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