

INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEW PAPER

Throughout last semester and this semester, you have researched a topic and presented a short summary of it in Discussion forums. While following similar principles as your discussion forum posts, the goal for this paper is to provide a more in depth review of a topic for your peers.

Instructions: Instructions for all steps are in your Blackboard folder and attached to the discussion forum. Scroll to find the pertinent sections!

More information on writing, finding and citing sources and graphing, how to write a review paper and examples of review papers are on Blackboard.

Goal: The overarching goal of this assignment is to pick a topic, research it and write a coherent, informative and clear paper on it. While a review paper has some structural components (see below), it's not as rigorously defined as a scientific research paper. You probably have written something very similar before just maybe not on a science subject. We try to give you some hints below, but keep in mind that the idea here is to teach your peers about a particular topic in more depth, and to be scientifically accurate, clear and informative in doing so.

Topic Choice: you are free to pick a topic you are interested in as long as it fits with the themes we covered this semester. Ideally, it should be interesting, of relevance today, broad enough to have a detailed summary of it, and narrow enough to do the topic justice within the scope of the paper. Subtopics within the topic are ok.

Topic Submission: your topic has to be approved! In a separate word document

- Have the title and your name
- Write one short paragraph on the intended objectives/scope of your paper and why you chose that topic
- Include at least one reference you are planning to use
- Upload this document on Blackboard using the Paper Topic upload link (not a discussion forum!).

References: You will need to search for and properly cite and reference four reliable sources, two of them primary scientific research articles. The quality of your source is important, since that is what you use for your paper, so don't pick sources that don't relate to it well.

Draft: is worth points and should be your final paper completed to at least 80% done. There is little point in receiving feedback on something that is incomplete. Feedback from your reviews should allow you to refine and tweak your paper, and improve its content and writing. Submit in the corresponding discussion forum

Reviews: you need to review 3 papers. Follow Instructions on how to review and what to look for. You will be graded on providing thorough and constructive feedback.

Final Paper: your revised final version. Submit in the corresponding discussion forum. **Bonus points are available for submissions of the final paper that are 7 days or earlier before the due date (same grading standards apply!).**

Length: Quality is always more important than word count. At 11pt font, 1 inch margins, 1.5 line spacing, you should have about 3 pages (not including the reference section)

Due Dates: check syllabus.

This assignment has to be done by you and be in your own work. Don't copy or paraphrase from other students, and always paraphrase your sources to avoid plagiarism! See the syllabus for information on and consequences of plagiarism.

Title

- Does not have to be on a separate page but should be centered in the middle, with author name underneath
- Your title should be specific and have information on what your paper is about

Abstract

- The abstract is a short (typically 250 words or less) summary of your paper and will tell your readers briefly what your paper is about without having to read all of it. It is not an Introduction. That is separate, so keep this short.
- It should state the objectives of the paper, the major points and the important conclusions.

Introduction

- The introduction introduces the scientific issue/topic you will talk about in more detail than the abstract does and should also include the scope (what you will cover in your review).
- You can include why you picked this topic or what interested you in it. That's not part of a typical review article but we'll make an exception.

Body of the Paper

- This is where you explore your topic in detail. If there are different subtopics within your topic, consider having subtitles.
- Pay attention to the structure and organize your paragraphs logically
- Remember to use your own words to summarize the knowledge you have gained from reading the sources rather than paraphrasing them
- Cite sources properly in the text and avoid direct quotes. They are not typically used in scientific writing and indicate that the author either does not understand the topic well enough or has not taken the time to put the information into words of their own.
- Try to incorporate tables or figures that help the reader understand your topic better if you do, number them and refer to them in the text and include table and figure legends ((a short caption that goes above in tables and below in figures to explain what we are looking at in more detail)
- You should present the topic objectively in this section (leave out personal opinions and save them for the conclusions)

Conclusions

- Every paper should end with concluding statements. This may depend on your topic, but can be a discussion of controversies in the literature, reference to a broader issue or directions for future research.
- You can include personal opinions or reflections in this section. That's also not part of a typical review article but we'll make another exception.

Reference List

- You should have at least four sources, two of them primary, two reliable secondary sources. Hint: if a citation generator can't generate a complete reference it is questionable whether it is a reliable source! These sources should be useful, so related to your topic in a meaningful way.
- Check the Appendix for how to properly put references into APA style.
- All the sources in your Reference List should be cited in the text somewhere, and all sources cited in the text should be in the Reference List

General

- Your paper will be evaluated on how well it is written, and whether it follows the required format and specifications. Writing is a process and is never really done, because almost any written work can always be improved. Your writing should be concise and coherent (logical), flow well, be easy to understand and demonstrate that you have mastered the topic. Scientific vocabulary should be used appropriately. This takes practice and understanding of the topic, but is important for good science writing.
- While every student should take reviews seriously and provide thorough and constructive feedback, there is unfortunately no guarantee that all your reviewers did. The absence of feedback does not necessarily mean that your writing does not need work! Please refer to the instructions.
- Run a spell and grammar check
- The writing has to be your own and be in your own words! Don't copy from other sources and always paraphrase your scientific sources.

REVIEWING A REVIEW PAPER

As you have seen, peer-review is a necessary step to get published and this applies to primary research articles as well as secondary review articles. Before papers are sent to the journal editor though, most researchers give them to their colleagues for critical feedback and suggestions, and they usually revise and improve their manuscripts several times before submitting them for review to a journal. Here, you get to do this for your class members!

Goal: The purpose for your responses for this assignment is peer review – review your peers' writing and provide feedback so they can improve and revise their draft for their final version. You will be graded on provided thorough and constructive feedback (as you would like to receive). Below are hints on what to look for.

- If you find specific deficiencies in the writing, grammar, spelling, or the flow and organization of the writing, offer specific suggestions for improvement. Please also indicate if there are areas that are well-written, since this also offers valuable feedback to the writer.
- Check that all sections are present.
- Check all the instruction to make sure the author does not have any mistakes or omissions!
- Check to see if the references are useful, appropriate and cited and referenced correctly.
- Your review must be thorough, but like an editor, you can use short sentences or words for your feedback – you don't have to write in essay style.
- Please keep your review professional. Keep in mind, that you will want constructive and professional feedback on your writing so strive to provide the same for your group members.
- Submit your reviews as responses in the Draft Paper Discussion Forum

Below are some questions to help with the review of each section. You don't have to comment on each point, this is just to help you with your review and make sure you don't miss anything. It is also a good check for your own draft!

Title

- Has the title captured the idea of the topic?
- Is it descriptive enough? Too long, too short?
- Does it include the author's name?

Abstract: Does it address all aspects of the paper? Does it include:

- Does it state the objectives/aim of the paper?
- Does it summarize the main points?
- Does it summarize major conclusions?
- Is it concise?
- Is it much longer than ~250 words? Too short?

Introduction

- Does the introduction introduce the paper's issue/topic and objectives in more detail?
- Is the paper's objective clear?
- Are references appropriate? Useful to the topic? Cited in text appropriately? Paraphrased and not quoted?

Body of the Paper

- Is the topic explored with thoroughness and clarity?
- Are the sources synthesized properly or just summarized?
- Are there sections with quotes?
- Are there figures or tables that help understand the topic?
- If there are, do they have appropriate figure and table legends (a short caption that goes above in tables and below in figures to explain what we are looking at in more detail)?
- Are they numbered and referred to by numbers in the text?
- Is it objective?

Conclusions

- Is there a section with thoughtful conclusions?
- Is it more than one sentence long and has some information on future research or the broader picture?

References

- Are all required sources present and appropriate in terms of type and content?
- Are they listed in the appropriate format (check Appendix for APA reference guidelines)
- Are all articles cited in the text listed in the reference section?
- Are all articles listed in the reference section cited in the text someplace?

General

- Content
 - Has the author demonstrated that they understand the underlying theoretical concepts of the topic?
 - Has the topic been explored and presented in appropriate depth or are there aspects that are not clear to the reader?
 - Is the topic presented in an informative way, paragraphs organized clearly?
 - Does the introduction prepare the reader for the body of the paper/
 - Do the conclusions provide a thoughtful and logical ending to the paper?
- Quality of Writing
 - Is the paper overall well-written? Spelling and grammar correct? Language clear and concise? All sections present? Does the narrative flow easily or are the paragraphs choppy?
 - Format appropriate? Spacing, margins, font as required?
 - Species names in italics (if appropriate)?
 - In text citations present and in required format? Citations paraphrased properly? References listed appropriately in the Reference section?