

Guidelines for Environmental Analysis Paper
ENVS 10 Sect. 06 Spring 2008
Lecturer: Stephanie Coppeto

A. Overview: This paper is designed to introduce you to current environmental topics and the scientific literature and show your critical thinking skills. In this assignment, students will objectively analyze an environmental topic of your choice using known scientific facts relevant to the issue. The paper must be based on independent and original library research you have conducted.

B. Topics: Choose one environmental topic to research in the library. Make the topic specific so you will be able to find the right articles and cover your analysis in three double-spaced pages.

Example topics:

“The effects of climate change on”:

- species geographic ranges
- coastal wetlands
- water resources in California
- California native plants
- indigenous human communities
- restoration of the San Francisco Bay Delta

“The effects/benefits of”:

- GMOs on public health
- Transportation on wildlife movement (choose a specific species)
- Invasive species on biodiversity
- Habitat fragmentation on biodiversity
- Wind turbines on migratory birds
- Restoration for vernal pool/wetland conservation
- Recycling for decreased waste production

“The conservation of”:

- California tiger salamander
- San Joaquin kit fox
- California spotted owl
- Salmon

See the US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game web sites below for lists of endangered and threatened species: http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/species/t_e_spp/index.html
http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/StateListing.do?state=all

C. Topic Analysis: Carefully analyze the topic using known scientific facts you have gained and ask yourself the following questions: Why is your topic important? What are the main issues? How does the research you have found shed light on the topic (use specific examples with citations)? Question the explanations – do they address the problem, do their results seem plausible, can more be done? What are some future directions for research in this area? Does society influence your topic or vice versa?

D. Paper Content: The paper should include the following sections:

- 1) **Title:** Make it catchy but make it true to the content of your paper and make it brief
- 2) **Introduction** (first paragraph or two) – Introduce the topic that you will be discussing and include a clear thesis sentence. Use relevant background information to set the stage for your topic.
- 3) **Body:** Following the introduction, you should expand on your specific topic. Think, what are the major points you want to make? Choose a few and describe how your articles demonstrate these issues. What makes these issues important overall? Use concrete examples from the articles (remember to cite!). Analyze the situation – does the science provide plausible explanations? How do societal views influence this area of science and vice versa?
- 4) **Conclusion** (last paragraph): Summarize the major points of the paper and describe future directions for research in this area. Do not include any new information in the conclusion.

E. Literature Sources: You are required to use at least **three** references including a minimum of two independent research articles in scientific journals. The third reference may be another research article or may include a book chapter (including your textbook if appropriate), “gray literature” (government reports and environmental impact statements and reports), or **one** internet source. You must use your own words when summarizing the information in the articles (or else you are plagiarizing).

F. Citations and References Section: You must cite the literature you use in the body of the paper and in a “References” section at the end of the paper. Refer to the Modern Language Association (MLA) format for citation assistance: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>.

- i. **In text citations** will include the author’s last name and year of publication (Smith 2007). For papers that have two authors, citation will look like this (Smith & Jones 2006). For papers with more than two authors, the citation will look like this (Smith *et al.* 2005). For citations from multiple sources, the references will be presented in chronological order and the citation will look like this (Smith *et al.* 2005, Smith and Jones 2006).
- ii. **Reference Section** is not included in your paper page limit but is an additional page attached to the end of your paper in which you alphabetically and chronologically list the references you have used. A journal article reference will look like this: Smith, P. E. 2007. Article title. Journal Title. Volume: pages.

G. Tables and Figures: You may incorporate figures and tables if their source is properly identified and you include a descriptive title. Figures and tables are not included in the page limit.

H. Format and Deadlines: The assignment is divided into three parts. All parts should be formatted in 12 point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins. Any papers exceeding the assigned page limit will be penalized 5% of the total possible grade.

1. **Paper Outline (due Feb 9th):** In one page, identify the specific environmental issue, summarize the main topics you will cover and the main themes of the paper. Include a references section listing the relevant articles you are using.
2. **Draft Paper (due March 19th):** A three-page draft of your paper should be as complete as possible. Remember, more work done now means fewer revisions for the final paper. The draft should include comments made on the topic outline if you feel these will improve the paper. References and tables/figures are expected in the draft.
3. **Final Paper (due April 23rd):** A three-page final paper that is checked and double-checked for errors. The final paper should incorporate the suggested revisions from the draft paper if you feel these improve your paper. Submit the reviewed paper abstract and draft paper with your final paper.

I. Grading: Your paper assignments will be graded on content, grammar and style, and references. Please consider the following when you are writing and reviewing your papers:

1. Paper Content: Organization of thoughts, relevancy of topic and paper selected to the topic, depth of exploration into topic, level of work, level of analysis and critical thinking, inclusion of societal role, care in proof-reading, frequency of typographical and spelling errors.
2. Grammar and Style: Margins, font size and type, use of subheadings, sentence structure, proper use of adjectives/adverbs, tense, neatness of presentation, overall style.
3. References: Presence, correct style, number of citations.