

VEGETATION PROJECT

Endnote file: a list of very useful references on Utah/Intermountain vegetation which you will be able to find in the library. All in all, a good place to start. This file can be accessed from any computer that has the Endnote program, computers in the Marriott, and the Mac's in south biology. You can download the Endnote viewer from the Mac or PC version folders found the Ecophysiology server. This can be accessed through ehleringer.net/biology_5460.

Figures

1. There should be no less than 3 figures in the paper, and each should highlight something interesting in your thesis.
2. The figures should be referred to in the text, and if each figure had it's own caption describing the data/picture, that would be swell too.
3. The figure should not be too big or too small--somewhere in the range of 7 x 10 cm is appropriate. In other words, do not present me with three huge figures and little text, or conversely, postage-stamp sized pictures that I cannot deduce. I will deduct grades for poor scans, unappealing pictures, tiny fonts, redundancy or any other related graphics crime.

Writing Style

1. Please write a nice, solid introduction and add a concluding paragraph or summary.
2. An incomprehensible writing style and bad sentence structure will make me angry, but more importantly, the efforts of your research and critical thinking will be obscured. Do yourself a favour and proofread. It will make the world a happier place.
3. Ditto for the organization of your paper: it's nice to read an organized, well structured manuscript that doesn't jump erratically from idea to idea, but rather, flows along logically.
4. A few spelling errors I can handle, but more than few transgressions may lead to your arrest.

Information and Content

1. Ask yourself: why am I writing about this? Why is it interesting to me? Convey the 'why' to the reader.
2. Analyze and think about what you read: what is the literature telling you? What is it NOT telling you? Add your own insight.
3. Develop a thesis, or point of view which you will support with facts or arguments. This should be apparent from your introduction. The following example tells the reader what the paper is about, and why it's interesting: "This paper will review the ecology and physiology of halophytic species around the Great Salt Lake. Living in some of the most stressful environments, halophytes employ physiological, biochemical and structural adaptations to thrive in extreme edaphic conditions where only a handful of plants are likely to survive." The author will then follow through and lay out the body of your essay accordingly, addressing the landscape, ecology, physiology, biochemistry and other fascinating tidbits in a nice progression.
4. Always add a concluding or summary paragraph: re-state the thesis, discuss some possible implications or wider significance of your topic and add a final statement on the subject.
5. Try to stay within the 5 page limit. Six pages is permissible, but I will not look kindly upon 6+ pages. I will not read past 7 pages.

References

1. Of the 15 required references, a maximum of 2-3 can be stable websites. What I'd really prefer is that you add such website references in addition to the 15 you found from peer-reviewed journal sources. Stable websites: www.noaa.gov, www.co2science.org Unacceptable websites: www.classnotes.com/35/co2/points/stuff. Such strange websites may be temporary and the information incorrect.

2. You can either use the authors name and year of publication, or a parenthesized number to indicate that you are citing a source. For example, "Halophytes are salt tolerant plants (Pittermann, 2001)". If you choose to reference a statement with a citation number such as (1) or (1,3,15), make sure that it corresponds to the right publication on your reference list.

3. Be consistent in how you cite your references both during the paper (ie: don't switch between using author+year and number), and in your list at the end of the essay.

Example: Raven J.A. and D. Edwards (2001) Roots: evolutionary origins and biogeochemical significance. *Journal of Experimental Botany* 52: 381-401. (author(s), year, title of article, source journal, volume, pages). I'm less picky about books, but always include the relevant authors, editors, year, book and/or article title, printing press and city.

Don't underestimate me--I may check your sources.

Overall Impression

1. Did you put in an earnest effort?
2. Is the paper generally well prepared, easy to read/follow with nice graphics and interesting material?

Get in touch with your inner 'teen' and check out these useful websites on writing essays:

www.ipl.org/teen/aplus

<http://members.tripod.com/lkivingston/essay/>

Other stuff

1. Making a PDF document: see my instructions on the WebCT bulletin board under making PDF documents. Adobe Distiller is available at the Marriott library for PC's (version 4) and on the Mac's in South Bio (version 3). Both computer centers have assistants that can lend a hand if you have problems. Version 4 instructions (easy): Open distiller, and open the file you wish to convert. Make sure the PDF file is saved in a known destination, like your floppy. In some (newer) versions of MSword, the Acrobat icon is the top tool bar and all you have to do is 'click'.

Brief instructions for version 3: Save document; ie 'vegetation'. Choose print from the top menu, in the print window, choose print to 'file', rather than 'printer'. Make sure the destination is the desktop, and click OK. The extension on your file should be 'vegetation.ps' for Macs, and 'vegetation.prn' for PC's. If these extensions do not appear, type them in before you proceed. Open Acrobat Distiller, and choose open in the top menu. Choose your 'vegetation.ps/prn' document, and click OK.

Kinko's has Acrobat Distiller, version 4, just in case you're desperate the night before. Talk to me or Jim if you need help, but not at 2am.

TA stuff: office hours are anytime by appointment. New discussion session times:

Tuesday 9:30-10:30 in ASB504

Wednesday 8:30-9:30

Thursday right after class until 12:45pm.