

Article summary

Reading and understanding scientific papers are critical skills in ecological research. Gaining these skills will take practice because the format, style, and level of detail in scientific writing can be overwhelming. You are not expected to understand every detail in most papers—but you will need to gain the ability to glean the main points and take-home message(s). This assignment will help you identify these critical pieces of information and understand how they fit in with the rest of your ecological knowledge. For each of questions 2-9 below, write your answer in complete sentences as concisely as you can (1-3 sentences max).

1. What is the correct citation for the paper? Use the citation format for the journal *Ecology*. For example, for a journal article with more than one author, this citation is in the correct format:
Higgs, E., D. A. Falk, A. Guerrini, M. Hall, J. Harris, R. J. Hobbs, S. T. Jackson, J. M. Rhemtulla, and W. Throop. 2014. The changing role of history in restoration ecology. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* 12: 499-506.
2. What is the Big Ecological Question or Issue that this article addresses? This should be presented in the first paragraph of the introduction.
3. What is the specific research question and/or hypothesis of the study? These should be presented in the last paragraph of the introduction.
4. Very briefly (2 sentences max), describe the approach or methods the authors used to address the question.
5. Very briefly (2 sentences max), describe the most important findings or results of the paper. Which figure(s) or table(s) shows these results?
6. Was the hypothesis supported?
7. Do the authors use their findings to make an argument or draw a conclusion about the Big Ecological Question or Issue? What is the connection between their results and the Big Issue?
8. Do you believe their conclusions are justified and correct? Why or why not?
9. How or why is this paper relevant to your project? What question does it answer for you? There are many ways a paper can be useful for a project, including: providing general background on the big question or issue, providing specific background on the study system or species, explaining useful methods or study design, producing specific results that can be compared with yours, presenting main conclusions that fit in with an argument you are trying to make, and many others.