

BIO 45 -- PERSONAL JOURNAL -- BASIC INSTRUCTIONS -- 2002

The major vehicle for getting you to be an active participant in the course is the journal of observations and ideas you will keep during the course. It will teach you a lot about your interest in and skill at watching animals. It will also teach you a lot about how animals behave, how science is done, and how to identify and deal with bias. This handout introduces the basic goals and rules for your journal. You will get a handout with detailed instructions before each exercise. The **Bio 45 web site** -- www.brown.edu/Courses/Bio_45/ has essential information about journals and the animals you will most likely encounter on the. Be absolutely sure to visit the journal section of the web site often!

The journal is a central learning tool for this course and it gives you a personalized way to communicate with us. You have to be involved with the journal regularly (not just a day before the assignment is due). I encourage you to put more into your journal than the minimum required in the assignments. As you begin to appreciate its value, you should feel less like having to do it and more like wanting to. If this does not happen, at least there is one less career option to worry about.

Each of the 5 main journal exercises will be graded on: 1) whether it was it on time and the assignment was complete and 2) whether you put in the minimum required effort. In addition, I may use my estimate of your effort and progress in the journal as a means of deciding whether to raise or lower your final course grade.

Things You Must Do for Every Assignment

1. Turn in Your Journal on Time.

On the dates listed on the Reading List, give your journal to your teaching assistant at lecture. It will be returned to you by the next lecture with our comments. **The journal assignments must be completed on time.** We will return incomplete journals to you at the next lecture and expect them back, completed, by the following lecture.

2. Pay close attention to the assignments -- be sure to complete them!

Although the journal is an open-ended learning tool, each assignment is designed to help you enhance your ability to see, describe and interpret behavior. You must complete the assignment as requested. Take the assignment sheet with you when you observe.

3. Include the following at the beginning of each observation:

Date - e.g., Friday, 10 September

Location - e.g., sidewalk between Sciences library and Chemistry building

Organisms observed - e.g., workers of a colony of ants - foraging at remains of ice cream cone

Weather and comments about conditions - e.g., windy, partly cloudy and cold. Rained a lot yesterday
- standing puddles on walkway. Sun shines directly on sidewalk.

Starting time of observations -- ending time of observations - e.g., 1:35 to 2:20

Record the time every 5-10 min. as you are watching, or as major events occur.

4. Structure your journal so we can easily find weekly assignments.

Clearly label each exercise you are doing. Guide us to the relevant bits (Post-It notes are great!).

5. Leave us room to make comments and answer your questions.

6. Record your observation and brainstorming times on the calendar we will provide.

7. Use a hard cover, bound notebook (e.g., Chemistry lab book)

If you want to make an observation and do not have your journal, use separate sheet of paper and then tape or staple it into your journal later -- **do not add loose pages.**

8. Write as you watch, not hours later.

Messy writing and first hand observations are better than neat writing and edited observations. However, we still have to be able to read your notes. You can always summarize your observations to help us through a chaotic page or two of field notes.

9. Try not to interfere with the animals you watch. Be patient, stay still for at least 15-20 minutes before you give up on an individual. Don't try to get too close.

Getting Started - see web site!

Overview of Journal Exercises – see web site!