Current Events in Ecology and Biology
Posting and Commenting to the Class Blog

Writing Your Current Events in Biology Summary

The first step to complete a *Current Events in Biology* assignment (CEB) is to write a brief, no more than a 2/3 of a typed page, summary of the article that outlines your take on the most important points the author is making and then a discussion of how this article is related to the topics that we are studying in class. Do not confuse this type of an assignment with the longer article summaries you will also be doing in this class; they are two different types of writing.

Your CEB should include the following.
1. A complete citation for the article: author, title, date, magazine/blog, web citation, etc. Use your writers guide or go to the [Cornell University Library](#) for help with this.
2. A summary of the major points the author is making in the article along with two or more supporting examples. Be sure you read the entire article before writing this summary in order to be sure you know what the important, central message actually is.
3. A discussion of how this relates to our current class work. Identify the concepts and principles that we are studying and then relate them to the information and concepts of the article. Give relevant examples.
4. Proof read your work for spelling and grammatical errors!

Once you have posted your summary using the instructions below, you will also be required to post two (2) comments on your classmates work. Use the instructions below. Your comments should follow these principles.
1. Your comments should be brief, three or four sentences at the most.
2. Your choice of words should be supportive and respectful. You can disagree with your classmate's points, but do so in a manner that you would expect others to treat your work.
3. Focus your comments on how the writer did/or did not address the purpose of the summary. Did they identify the major points of the article's author? Did they relate the article to our current class work? You can also comment on the mechanics of the post (spelling, clarity, etc.) if that is an obvious issue.

How to Post Your CEB Assignments to the Class Wall

If you are asked to post your CEB to the class wall, use the following simple instructions. Your class wall is located at a website called "Padlet." It is set up so you and your classmates can quickly add text, images, etc. for all to view.

1. Click on the Padlet link on the MyFBA homepage for our class.
2. Find a spot on the wall where you want to add your CEB or comments and click.
3. A text box should open where you can enter your work.
4. You can either enter your text directly onto the class wall or you can copy/paste from another text editor such as Pages or MS Word. If you do copy/past from another text editor, keep your formatting to a minimum since not all of the formatting features may be supported by Padlet.
5. That's it.

How to Post Your Assignments to the Blog

These are the steps you need to follow in order to successfully post your work to our class blog. Pay attention to the settings to insure that your posting goes to the correct place and carries the proper identification.

1. Become a "junior author" of our class blog by following the instructions in the email you will receive inviting you to join the class blog. You only need to do this once at the beginning of the school year.
2. Go to www.typepad.com and log in with your user name and password.
3. Click on the "Begin New Post" link.
4. Before you begin entering the text of your essay, set up the following options in the right hand column of the screen.
   - Under "Categories" select the assignment you are entering, e.g. CEB1, CEB2, etc.
   - Under "Comments" select the open comments option. Under "Posting Status" select to Publish Now or Publish On and then select the date your posting will appear on the blog. If you leave this option as Draft, your work will be saved on TypePad but not posted to the blog. Saving your work as a Draft is useful if you need to continue working on your post before it is ready to publish.
   - If you want to receive emails letting you know that someone has commented on your post, check off accept trackbacks, otherwise leave this option as is.

5. Be sure you are on the tab "Rich Text" and not "HTML". If you are very confident that you can edit the html code of your post, try it. Understand that one simple oversight in your code will ruin your posting! Use with caution.
6. In the title bar be sure that you identify yourself with your first name and last initial and include the assignment number, e.g. Jennifer A. CEB 1.
7. Enter the text of your assignment. You are encouraged to use the formatting and spell checking features to enhance your post. If you prefer, you can compose your essay in a word processing program and then copy and paste to the blog.
8. If you do use a word processing program, be sure you use a simple format such as "Rich Text Format" or simple "Text." More sophisticated formats such as Microsoft Word document (.doc) may not be compatible with the blog editor.
9. You are encouraged to include pictures and other graphics to complement your posting. Be sure that you include proper citations indicating the source of these graphics. We will cover this technique in class.
10. Once you are satisfied that your options have been set correctly and your text and title are in good order, click on "Publish." Go to the *Biology* class blog link on Mr. Birch's Class Pages to view your work.

How to Post Comments to the Blog

Once your summaries have been posted, you will usually be required to comments on the work of your classmates. Submitting comments is a simple procedure, but you must be careful to follow the required steps.

1. At the bottom of each post you will see information such as the name of the author, the date of posting, and "comments (#)." This last bit of information indicates the link to the comment section for that posting and the number of current comments is given in parentheses. Note: If the comments for the post have been closed, you will not be able to continue. This will happen once the due date for the comments has passed.
2. Try to comment on a classmate's post that does not yet have any comments.
3. When you click on the comment link, you will see a text box where you can enter your comment. Be sure that you proof read your comment before moving onto the next step.
4. You will need to enter your name. Please use only your first name and last initial. Also enter your school email address. The email address will not appear on the comment; it is used to verify you are a valid user.
5. You may use the Preview button to review the appearance of your comment.
6. Finally click on Post to add your comment to the blog. You may be asked to enter a security code as well. Don't ignore this. If you do, you may get a message indicating that your comment has been posted, but actually it won't be published on the blog.

Grading Policies for Postings and Comments

1. The posting to the class blog is worth 15 points and your two comments are worth 5 points for a total of 20 points.
2. The grade for the posting will be based on its completeness including the correct citation, an accurate summary with supporting examples, a clear connection between the article and our studies, as well as good mechanics of writing.
3. The grade for the comments will be based on evidence that you read your classmate's work and have responded appropriately and identified the strong and weak points of the summary.
4. Post which are submitted late will lose 5 points each day they are late starting with the day that they are due. Comments which are submitted late will lose 1 point each day they are late starting with the day that they are due.

Useful Web Sites for Finding CEB Articles

Here are a few web sites that often have good articles for CEB assignments. There are many more if you look for them.

- Science Blogs
- Not Exactly Rocket Science
- Science Blogging
- The Loom
- Science Daily
- Science News
- Science News, New York Times