**Scientific Writing**

This exercise is meant to introduce you to scientific writing, with the hope that this opportunity will improve the quality of your written communication in lab reports and expand your interest in biology. I welcome any comments you have about this assignment.

Feel free to ask questions about this article in class. Be prepared to direct us to the paragraph or figure around which your question is focused.

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**Article:**

*(Please follow this format when citing journal article references in a scientific report.)*


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Articles in scientific journals commonly include an Abstract or “summary” section before the introduction. Although you may not be asked to include an abstract in your lab reports, notice that this section of a scientific paper is very useful when searching the literature base for specific information, without having to read the entire article. The hypothesis, methods, major results and conclusions are all summarized in the abstract.

**Assignment:** Please take note of the following features of this article (and scientific papers in general), by answering the following questions. There will be at least one question from this article on the upcoming lecture quiz.

**Title:** What kinds of information are provided in the title?

**Introduction:**

1. Does the introduction describe the study subjects, the purpose of the investigation, and the predicted outcome? (What are the main questions the researchers are attempting to answer.)
2. Have you, the reader, been given enough information to comfortably proceed reading the rest of the paper?
3. Is there an indication that the researchers have thoroughly reviewed the pertinent literature?
4. Are the dependent, independent, and controlled variables introduced clearly?

**Methods and Materials:**

1. Are the study sites and times accurately described?
2. What is/are the independent variable/s? What is/are the dependent variable/s and how are they measured (ie. what results will you look for when you read the next section)?
3. How many replications of the experiment were performed?
4. Could you reproduce this experiment accurately according to the information given?
5. What problems were encountered during the experiment, and how were they handled?
6. Were the key terms used for the purposes of this report clearly defined?

**Results:**

1. What are the significant results?
2. What information can be obtained from tables and figures?
3. Are the figures labeled so that information is readily available?
4. Based on the description of methods, are you confident that the results are reliable? (Do not be concerned at this time if you are not familiar with linear regression or other statistical tests. We are studying this article primarily for information on format and style.)

**Discussion:**

1. Are the results explained and discussed in the context of the stated hypothesis?
2. Were unexpected results discussed, and suggestions for further investigation explained?

**References:**

1. Is this a comprehensive list of all the references cited in the paper?
2. Is an appropriate format followed, and can you find the original publication using the information given?