

Journal Club Presentation Guidelines

Purpose: To allow students to do a slide-based, extemporaneous group presentation on a scientific topic in a friendly atmosphere

Overview: For this assignment, students will do a slide-based group presentation of a scientific article in a journal club format. Students will be grouped by the instructor. The journal club articles, which will be chosen by the instructor, will be posted in the Assignments section of the course Blackboard site four weeks before they are to be presented in class. Thus, each group of presenters will have four weeks to work on their presentation. Three weeks before the presentation, the group will meet with Dr. Sher to discuss the paper. A provisional outline of the presentation and copies of the slides that the group plans to use must be emailed to Dr. Sher by class time two weeks before the in-class presentation. The group must do a practice talk for an audience chosen by Dr. Sher one week before the in-class presentation.

Requirements and Deadlines:

For the Presenters:

1. Your journal club paper should appear in the Assignments section of the course Blackboard site four class weeks before your presentation. If your article does not appear on time, tell Dr. Sher ASAP: you do not want a Blackboard glitch to reduce the amount of time you have to prepare!
2. Three weeks before the presentation, your group will meet with Dr. Sher in her office to discuss the paper during the class's "fourth hour" (Friday, 2:00 PM.) Before the meeting, each member of the group must read the paper and prepare a short summary of the article and a set of discussion points for use in this conversation. The article summary and discussion points will be worth 5% of the grade for the journal club presentation assignment.
2. The first version of your group's outline and slides will be due two weeks before the in-class presentation. Your group must email these items to Professor Sher no later than the start of class on the day that they are due. Turning the outline and slides in on time constitutes 10% of the grade for the journal club presentation assignment. You will use your outline, NOT a script or note cards, as the basis for your talk.
3. Your group must give a practice talk for your assigned audience a week before the in-class presentation; this practice talk will take place during the class's "fourth hour" on Friday. Your audience will give you feedback that can be used to improve your presentation. The journal club peer feedback form for audience members is available in

the Information section of the course Blackboard site. The practice talk constitutes 15% of the grade for the journal club presentation assignment.

4. The in-class presentation of your article should take approximately fifteen to twenty minutes, and the presentation time must be split evenly between the members of your group; each member of the group will be responsible for a single block of time during the presentation, rather than splitting his/ her time into multiple blocks. During the presentation, your group should provide any necessary background information, summarize and explain the article, and discuss the article's use of estimation techniques.
5. At the end of the in-class presentation, your group will answer questions and facilitate audience discussion of the article.
6. After the presentation, your group must turn in a printout of the final version of the slides, a printout of the final version of the outline, and the completed comment forms provided by the students who listened to your practice talk.

For Everyone Else:

1. All students must read the article in advance and type a short article summary and a list of questions about the article to be used in class and then turned in on the day of the presentation.
2. Over the course of the semester, each student will be required to ask a total of three questions during in-class journal club presentations.
3. Each student must be an audience member and fill out a comment form for at least one person's practice talk. Doing this counts towards the class participation grade.

Helpful Hints:

1. Read Dr. Sher's handout on how to read a scientific paper. It is available in the Information section of the course Blackboard site.
2. Remember that Dr. Sher is a resource for this assignment. If you are having a great deal of difficulty understanding your assigned article, she can help translate it into more comprehensible terms for you. If you're busy during office hours, you can schedule an appointment by sending an email message to btsher@wm.edu that lists some time blocks during normal business hours that would work for you.

3. As a group, talk about the story that you want to tell about your journal club article in the presentation before you start to put the presentation together. That story, not your slides, should provide the underlying structure for the talk.
4. Before your group makes any slides for the talk, everyone in the group should read Chapter 4 of Michael Alley's *The Craft of Scientific Presentations*. As you construct your slides, follow the book's helpful suggestions on assertion-evidence slide design. Remember that carefully selected visual information from your journal club article, such as graphs, diagrams, and tables, can be used to support the points that you plan to make in your presentation. A helpful tutorial on the use of assertion-evidence slides is available at <http://www.assertion-evidence.com/tutorial.html>. Examples of assertion-evidence slides are available in the Information section of our Blackboard site.
5. Remember that you must discuss your slides in depth: as Alley says, slides are not wallpaper. Flashing slides at the audience without talking about their contents will significantly lower your presentation grade.
6. See the slide-related grading criteria for the journal club presentation for other mistakes (bullet points, unnecessary details, irrelevant images, unnecessary special effects) to avoid.
7. Practice, practice, practice! Doing extra practice talks as a group will help the in-class presentation go more smoothly.
8. Time yourself during your practice talk(s), and remember that the presentation time must be evenly divided between the presenters.
9. Online pronunciation dictionaries can help you learn to pronounce unfamiliar terms correctly. If you Google "dranunculiasis pronunciation," for example, you will find sites that will 'speak' the word "dranunculiasis" for you.

Grading:

The journal club presentation will be worth 100 points, or 20% of the course grade. The discussion points and article summary will be worth 5 points; turning the outline and slides in on time will be worth 10 points; the practice talk will be worth 15 points; and the in-class presentation will be worth 70 points. Half of the presentation grade will be based on the criteria in the Journal Club Presentation Grading Checklist, which assesses the effectiveness of the group presentation as a whole; the other half of the presentation grade will be determined for each individual student using the criteria in the Individual Presenter Grading Checklist. Thus, the overall presentation grades for individual members of the group may be different. Only the in-class presentation will be graded: preparation points will be automatic if the required steps happen on time.

Group Grade: Journal Club Presentation Grading Checklist

In an A presentation...

- Intro engages audience attention with important information about the article's topic
- Intro contains the central idea of the presentation and previews the presentation
- Presentation provides all important background information needed by audience
- Presentation accurately summarizes the work described in the article, focusing on the article's use of estimation
- Presentation is scientifically accurate
- Presentation flows naturally, with smooth, well-telegraphed transitions
- Handoffs between individual presenters are smooth
- Presentation time is split evenly between the presenters
- Slides illustrate important points in the talk and/or show key data
- Slides are in assertion-evidence format
- Slides are easy to read and to understand
- Slides have a single main point
- Presenters split the questions after the talk evenly

In a B presentation...

- Intro gets audience attention in a way that is relevant to the article's topic
- Presentation contains most of the background information needed by audience
- Presentation summarizes the work described in the article, mentioning the article's use of estimation
- Presentation has only minor scientific errors
- Presentation flows logically, but transitions could be stronger
- Handoffs between individual presenters work, but could be smoother
- Conclusion psychologically closes presentation
- Slides illustrate points and/or show data

In a C presentation...

- Intro is perfunctory or has only a superficial relationship to the article's topic
- Presentation omits many key ideas from the article
- Presentation omits many important pieces of background information
- Presentation has significant scientific errors
- Presentation is repetitive
- Handoffs between individual presenters are awkward
- Presentation is rushed
- Conclusion is abrupt or leaves the audience hanging
- Slides contain some irrelevant material, such as fancy borders or unnecessary special effects
- Slides are flashed at the audience, rather than discussed in detail
- Presentation time is unevenly split between the presenters
- One presenter answers most of the questions after the talk

A presentation in need of improvement...

- Lacks an introduction and/ or a conclusion
- Shows a lack of comprehension of the article
- Has major scientific errors
- Is difficult or impossible to follow
- Slides are too much detailed to be fully described in the time available
- Slides contain bullet points
- Presenters read bullet-pointed slides to the audience
- Slides contain a lot of irrelevant material
- Images do not support the assertions made by the slides
- Slides are accompanied by many distracting special effects (Prezi presentations, for example)
- At least one presenter answers no questions after the talk

Individual Grade: Individual Presenter Grading Checklist

In an A presentation...

- Presentation is scientifically accurate
- Presentation flows naturally, with smooth, well-telegraphed transitions
- Presenter makes effective eye contact with the audience
- Presentation is extemporaneous
- Slides are fully described by the presenter
- Presenter's answers to questions show thorough understanding of the article
- Presenter answers his/ her fair share of the questions after the talk

In a B presentation...

- Presentation has only minor scientific errors
- Presentation flows logically, but transitions could be smoother
- Presenter makes significant eye contact with members of the audience
- Presentation is mostly extemporaneous; outline is used infrequently
- Presenter's answers to questions show understanding of the article's main points

In a C presentation...

- Presentation has significant scientific errors
- Presentation is repetitive and/or has poor transitions
- Presentation is rushed
- Presenter avoids making eye contact with audience
- Presenter relies heavily on outline or reads it to audience
- Slides are flashed at the audience, rather than described in detail
- Presenter answers almost all of the questions after the talk
- Presenter answers almost none of the questions after the talk
- Presenter's answers to questions show shaky comprehension of the article's main points

A presentation in need of improvement...

- Shows a complete lack of comprehension of the article
- Has major scientific errors
- Is difficult or impossible to follow
- Is delivered from a script
- Presenter reads bullet-pointed slides to the audience
- Presenter answers all of the questions after the talk
- Presenter answers none of the questions after the talk