

EEB Writing Ability List

By the time they graduate, EEB majors will have had opportunities to become proficient in the following writing abilities:

Novice (developed throughout the undergraduate curriculum, beginning in 1XXX and 2XXX courses)

- Write concisely, avoiding unnecessary language or information
- Use grammar and tone that are appropriate for the intended audience
- Describe observations and procedures concretely (avoiding abstract language or subjective characterizations)
- Write with biological accuracy (i.e., without teleology or anthropomorphosis)
- Use the appropriate scientific template when necessary to structure assignments (e.g., scientific papers, diagnostic keys)
- Interpret, construct, integrate, and properly caption and format figures and tables
- Create cohesive narratives that are structured to flow logically from one point to the next

Intermediate (developed in core 3XXX courses and upper-division electives)

- Formulate research or thesis questions that are appropriate in scope and topic
- Describe quantitative analyses accurately (e.g., statistical results and mathematical solutions)
- Argue logically and persuasively, using appropriate evidence
- Analyze for cause and effect
- Use writing to develop and deepen thinking
- Work and write collaboratively
- Write in a style that focuses on results (rather than on those who obtained the results)

Advanced (developed primarily in upper-division electives)

- Select appropriate (i.e., peer-reviewed) sources from the primary and secondary literature; interrogate those sources by evaluating them for logic, consistency, and soundness; and acknowledge those sources appropriately
- Develop independent, logical conclusions by synthesizing information from disparate sources, including original data and published studies
- Recognize the importance of variability in biological systems in the design and interpretation of research and in the synthesis of findings across studies
- Write credibly and persuasively to a variety of assigned audiences