

Guide to writing your Natural History report

Natural History of Dinosaurs, 2016

Guidelines

The Natural History report is due: *April 25, 2016* in SECTION.

- **Report Body:** 4 pages long (no more, no less)
- **References:** Place your references on the 5th page. The format should be: “Author(s). Date. Title. Source.” All references must be cited at least once within the text of the report (see below for instructions regarding parenthetical citations)
- Need *at least* 5 references
- **Margins:** 1 inch (top, bottom, left, right)
- **Spacing:** 1.5
- **Font:** 12 point Times New Roman
- *Ignoring these guidelines will result in loss of points*

The topic of the paper must be based on your proposed and accepted paper abstract. If you wish to change your topic, you must consult me first. Your paper will be graded on *clarity, accuracy, creativity*, as well as the extent to which you follow the above directions.

To write a good paper, each paragraph should have a self-contained point that flows naturally from the previous paragraph and leads into the next. A key to writing a paper like this is to outline the topic for each paragraph ahead of time, before you begin writing. Once you have this *backbone*, make sure that the narrative makes sense, that it addresses the primary question/issue described in your abstract, and that there are no gaps in your logic. Accurately report what is known or not known in the field regarding your topic of interest. Make sure that you support your points with your references. To do this, you will need to include **parenthetical citations**. For example, you might write: “Dorsal plates among the *Thyreophora* may be arranged either parallel to one another, or offset from one another (Fastovsky, 2015)”. The citation for Fastovsky would then be included in your **References** section.

A general piece of advice is to start your paper with *an intriguing question* that captures the reader’s attention and lays out where the report is going. The rest of the paper will follow the narrative arc that you set up at the beginning. Your conclusion will briefly summarize the main points of the paper, and could also introduce additional questions or ideas that emerge from your research, and that follow from the points you raise in the report.