

How to write a Field Report

During Field Trips you need to make notes in your Field Notebook. Be sure to take detailed notes and to review these later (ideally later the same day).

The field component of this class makes up a significant percentage of the overall grade (~50%). Therefore it is very important that you pay close attention to the topics discussed in the field.

For each Field Report you will download a handout from the class webpage that will have introductory information about the location, and details such as driving directions, and parking information.

Use your field notes to write the report, but you will also need to do further research on your own to add details.

Field Report (15)

Your objective is to write a comprehensive account of what you saw, and what you heard during the fieldtrip. Imagine that one of your classmates could not make it to that particular fieldtrip- your Field Report should provide ALL the information that they need.

Orientation.

Trail Description - Record the name of the trail we start on, provide a description of the location (the western slope of the Santa Cruz mountains, off of Skyline Boulevard 4 miles south of Highway 92). (Don't include driving directions). As we proceed we may switch trails. You need to record the exact route we follow from start to finish.

During the field trip we will stop at various locations and discuss a variety of topics related to that location. For each field trip there will be a theme that will be related to the topics covered in lecture that week; for example, geology, or fire.

Document what was discussed at each stop during the fieldtrip. You can take notes, take photos, record the narration.

Observations

Make observations about each stop – is the plant a shrub or a tree, describe the leaves,

Plant Database (5)

For each fieldtrip we will either key out and identify plants, or we will talk about plants we encounter. For each fieldtrip you will need to download a copy of the plant list table

to help you to keep track of the names of the plants discussed each day. The format is the same as you will use to compile the Plant Database for the whole semester. The idea is that you can copy and paste the data to build up the plant database week by week.

Plant Profile (5)

Select one Plant Species and write a profile of that plant. Include detailed information on;

Physical Description;

Growth form: Is your plant woody or herbaceous, perennial or annual, a vine, a tree, or a shrub. What is it's average size when mature.

Describe the physical appearance of its leaves, their arrangement. Does it have spines, thorns, hairs, latex etc.

Preferred Habitat:

Where in it's community does your plant tend to grow best? Some plants require full sunlight to grow, while others are happy in partial or even full shade. Some plants have a preference for well drained soils, others cannot tolerate waterlogging.

Human Uses:

This may not apply to all plant species, but many native plant species have been used in the past for firewood, timber, fibers, edible fruit, medicinal properties, arrow shafts, to ward away evil spirits, and who knows what else you will discover.

Image of profiled plant (2.5)

This can be from a sketch made in the field, or a digital photograph. Take great care if you are trawling through the internet hoping to find an image of the plant we saw- the quality of the images varies, and the identification can be wrong. If you use an image from the web- copy and paste the URL for verification.

References (2.5)

You will need to research your selected plant species. References must be cited in a Reference section at the end of the Plant Profile. My preference is for the APA format: Author Last name, first (year) Title, but MLA is also acceptable.