

The Final Paper

Nutrition is a rapidly-changing field, and it is full of misinformation. The goal of the final paper is to train you to separate fact from fiction as our knowledge progresses.

Basic Requirements:

1. **Choose a topic that is relevant to Nutrition, but is in some way controversial.** Good examples include "fad" diets, dietary supplements, or superfoods.
2. **Write a 1-2 paragraph summary of an article that promotes your topic.** Be sure to identify *who* is making the claim, and *what* exactly the claim is. If you are choosing a large subject (such as a complex diet strategy), you can narrow down your subject by isolating one particular claim from within the whole "theory". **This short summary will count as one of our homework assignments.**
3. Research your subject, looking for arguments for and against the claims you chose to discuss. **You must cite and discuss at least two scientific articles.** A good scientific article is either:
 - a) A peer-reviewed scientific article, published in a reputable scientific journal of biology, nutrition or medicine, in which a particular experiment is described by the person or people who performed the experiment, or...
 - b) A detailed article from a major news- or popular science outlet (e.g. New York Times, Scientific American, etc) in which the *methods and results* of at least one peer-reviewed article are accurately summarized for a popular audience. If you have any reason to believe that this summary does not accurately reflect the original journal article, you are responsible for finding better descriptions of that work, or using the original article itself.
4. **Write a 5-page, double-spaced essay, in 12-point font and in your own words,** in which you...
 - a) Clearly define the claim that you wish to test
 - b) Discuss the available evidence and reference the articles you have found with end-notes.
 - c) Draw conclusions about the validity of the claim.
 - d) List the articles that you discuss in your essay, in the form of a short bibliography. You may pattern this bibliography after the format of any standard style-book (e.g. APA, Chicago, etc.) or the Cited References section any scientific journal article.
 - e) Recommended template:
 - Start with at least one paragraph (or up to a page) in which you describe the claim you wish to test. Be sure to include where you found the claim, what it says in general and which part of it you will investigate.
 - For the next 3-4 pages, describe each of the articles you found. What kind of experiment was performed in each? How was it set up? What conclusions did the authors draw? What problems exist in the article, if any?
 - For the rest of the paper, summarize the results of your research. Do the articles agree or disagree? What conclusion would you draw for your original claim? What other observations do you have about the claim or the research that you have done?
 - Finish with a list of references. See the course web page for help with formatting.
5. **Optionally,** you may hand in a rough draft of your essay for feedback. The due date of this draft is listed on the schedule in your syllabus. There is no grade-point value for this rough draft.

Name: _____

Grading Rubric for Final Paper

	25 points	20 points	10 points	0 points	Your score
Citations	At least two references to good scientific articles	At least 2 citations, and at least one is a good scientific article	2 citations, but no references to good scientific articles	Less than 2 citations of any kind	
Writing	Excellent style and grammar. Clear and concise, perhaps even elegant.	Some minor errors in grammar, punctuation or spelling, but clear and concise.	Ungrammatical writing or poor spelling and punctuation, but intelligible.	Unclear, ungrammatical writing. Writing is too hard to understand.	
Content	Demonstrates clear understanding of subject. Synthesis of the cited articles, plus accurate evaluation of their merits and flaws.	Demonstrates clear understanding of subject. Reaches conclusions by synthesis of the cited articles.	Demonstrates basic understanding of subject, but no application of reason. No conclusions beyond those shown in the articles.	Demonstrates no understanding of subject. No application of reason.	
Topic Interest	Topic is truly controversial and good data is available. Relevant to Nutrition class.	Topic fulfills the basic assignment and is relevant for a Nutrition class.	Topic is relevant to a Nutrition class.	Topic is inappropriate for class and does not fulfill the basic requirements of the assignment.	
				Total:	