MARB 435 Writing Assignment: Research Focus paper

Objectives
- Become familiar with peer-reviewed literature in invertebrate zoology
- Understand the rationale, objectives, methods, results and implications of specific studies in invertebrate zoology
- Learn to extract the most important information from the scientific literature in the field and synthesize it in your own words

Deadlines
- Feb. 15th: Abstract (schulzea@tamug.edu)
- April 12th: Final version of paper

Choosing a topic
Pick a current topic in invertebrate zoology and find relevant primary literature on the subject. An easy way to pick a topic is to look at the sections “Topics for Further Discussion and Investigation” at the end of each chapter in the textbook. If you pick your topic from there, find the references listed under the heading and pick one of them as your primary paper. It needs to be a peer-reviewed journal article (not a review article). If you have questions about what is a peer-reviewed article, check with me or your TAs.

Abstract (200 words):
- Summarize your primary article in your own words. Do not simply copy and paste from the abstract of the paper. Include some information on background, materials and methods, results and conclusions.
- You will receive feedback on your abstract that should help you write the final version of the paper. You will not receive a separate grade for your abstract but still lose 10% on your paper if submitting late.
- Submit a copy of the paper with your abstract

Guidelines for research focus paper:
- Include your name and/or UIN
- Length of paper: ~800 words excluding references and figure captions plus the corrected abstract
- Format: 1.5 or double-spaced
- The paper should focus on the primary reference that you wrote your abstract about but needs to include information from at least two additional scientific journal articles (these can be review articles)

Include the following sections:
- Title: Pick a concise and descriptive title that accurately reflects the contents of your paper
- Background: Present background information relevant to the study
- Research objectives and hypotheses: What is the rationale behind the study? Which hypotheses are the researchers testing?
• **Methods:** Briefly describe the methods used
• **Results:** Summarize the most important findings. Tables or figures are not required but you can use them if they help illustrate your points. Each table or figure needs to have a reference and a heading or figure caption (check the Research Focus Boxes in the textbook for appropriate formats)
• **Conclusions:** Which conclusions do the authors draw from their experiments? Do you agree with the conclusions? Is there any controversy among the papers that you have read? What are the wider implications of the studies?
• **References:** You can use textbook information in addition to the scientific journal articles. All references need to be cited in the text and all citations must have a reference in the Reference section. Follow the instructions for references and citations closely, including all punctuation, italics, bold print etc.

**Format for citations:**
Smith (1987) described...
Smith (1987, 1988) found that…
Smith & Brown (1986) state….
Smith et al. (1983) suggest… (use “et al.” if more than two authors are involved)
The phylum Porifera comprises sedentary filter-feeding organisms, well defined by the possession of an aquiferous system (Bergquist, 1978; Brusca & Brusca, 1990; Ruppert et al. 2004).

Websites: list the URL in parentheses.

**Format for references**

Journal article with a single author:
**Byrne, M. 1996.** Viviparity and intragonadal cannibalism in the diminutive asterinid sea stars *Patiriella vivipara* and *P. parvivipara*. *Marine Biology* **125:** 551-567.

Journal article with two authors:

Journal article with three authors:

Book:

Part of book: