

Biology Department Writing Plan

This document describes the expectations for *Writing Emphasis* courses in the Biology Department at Coe College. It identifies what the Biology Department values in effective writing, the types of skills students are expected to develop, and the types of assignments used in meeting the desired outcomes.

Values

Writing in Biology requires the ability to convey technical information. Students must be able to communicate information in a clear, unambiguous manner. Written documents must be well crafted, understandable, and professional. Good writing has the following qualities:

- Uses concise, direct prose with logical explanations
- Observes guidelines and conventions of specific wiring outlet
- Communicates ideas in text and through figures
- Uses technical but unambiguous language
- Relies on empirical evidence and data to support claims
- Adheres to ethical guidelines

Skills Development

Writing is a process that involves a lot of revisions. Also, great attention is paid to writing style and word usage, conventions in Biology, and ethics in science. To develop these skills, students routinely engage in the following activities:

- Revision and editing
- Research topics thoroughly
- Reading examples of writing and visualizing results
- Assignments requiring use of text and graphics
- Assignments in multiple formats
- Writing and revising workshops

Types of Texts Created

To be good writers in Biology, students must become good readers of the various forms of communication in the discipline. Students are introduced to the literature early in the curriculum, so they learn how to read scientific works, and in the process learn to write their own technical documents:

- Research papers, proposals, and abstracts
- Literature reviews
- Grant proposals
- Laboratory reports and notebooks
- Figures

Courses Focused on Writing

The following courses are designated as Writing Emphasis courses:

- BIO-145L Cellular & Molecular Biology Laboratory
- BIO-155L Organismal & Ecological Biology
- BIO-205L General Botany Laboratory
- BIO-235L Genetics Laboratory
- BIO-295L Spatial Ecology Laboratory
- BIO-325 Microbiology
- BIO-415L Developmental Biology Laboratory
- BIO-425L Ecology Laboratory