

College Writing Seminar (INTD100): Week 2 Notes

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Summary

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Week 2: *Concise writing II:* In Week 2, we will focus on reading a piece of science writing, and creating your *own* writing that tailors the story to a particular audience.

- Exercises: work in teams to produce a piece of science writing intended for a broad audience that weaves together information from a variety of sources: (a) a TED talk (b) a scientific journal article (c) and resources like Wikipedia and Google Scholar
- Homework: writing a post designed for social media about a piece of science that grabs the attention of a wide audience, and attempts to convince that audience that the science is interesting
- Exploration topic: Black hole observations

Group Project

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

Instructions: Systematically random groups (next slide)

1. Choose one of the following four topics on the following slides
2. Choose a *corresponding author* who will create a Google Document and share it with the others
3. Select a number of sources pertaining to the topic
 - TED talks
 - Scientific journals from arXiv.org and scholar.google.com
 - Sources located on Wikipedia
4. Create a map or outline with Coggle.it or other tool that summarizes recent discoveries
5. Write a 1 page, single-spaced, 12 point font summary ($\approx 800 - 1000$ words)'
6. **Bonus points: including a separate bibliography, correctly formatted**

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

1. Grace Cooper ... Group A
2. Zack Duhala ... Group B
3. Juan Estrada ... Group C
4. Jusraunaq Farmahan ... Group D
5. Mateo Gomez ... Group A
6. Elise Hansen ... Group B
7. Wyatt Killien ... Group C
8. Kyle Miller ... Group D

1. Eliot Moser ... Group A
2. Rudy Reyes ... Group B
3. Nick Reynolds ... Group C
4. Paulina Valdez ... Group D
5. Andrea Wainwright ... Group A
6. Natasha Waldorf ... Group B
7. Emma Walston ... Group C

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

Science Topics

1. Event Horizon Telescope and the First Picture of a Black Hole
 - What is long-baseline interferometry?
 - What are the properties of the black hole observed?
2. LIGO, Virgo and the First Neutron Star - Black Hole Merger
 - What is a neutron star?
 - What is a black hole neutron star merger?
3. IceCube Neutrino Observatory
 - What is a neutrino?
 - What is IceCube Neutrino Observatory and where is it located?
 - What major discoveries have they made so far?
4. Anything related to COVID-19 and the pandemic
 - How is the rate of spread quantified?
 - How fatal is the virus, and how does this vary for people?

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

Source classes

1. TED talks: surprisingly useful at the start:
`https://www.ted.com/talks/katie_bouman_how_to_take_a_picture_of_a_black_hole?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare`
2. Wikipedia has more sources: Event Horizon Telescope
`https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Event_Horizon_Telescope`,
references section leads you to arXiv.org with the exact set of
references to journals
3. arXiv.org and scholar.google.com, as previously discussed,
leads to journals
4. NewScientist, Space.com, Scientific American, etc.

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

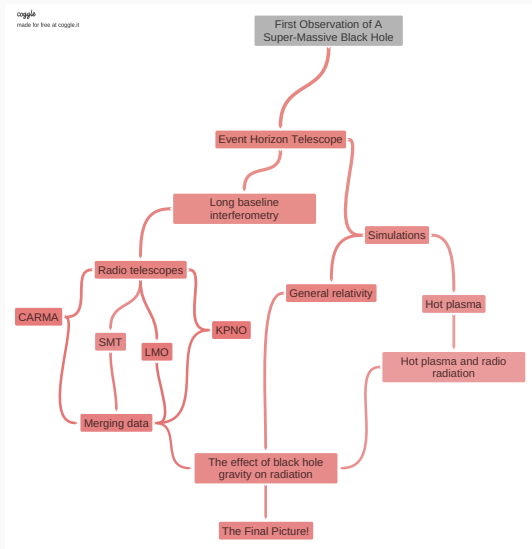


Figure 1: Black hole observations and Event Horizon Telescope.

Sources to Outline: Which details to cut?

1. Kill your darlings
2. Hierarchy of detail: which *level* of detail to cut?
3. Using analogies to replace finest details, equations
4. Cite or quote experts where appropriate

Group Project: Collaborative Science Writing

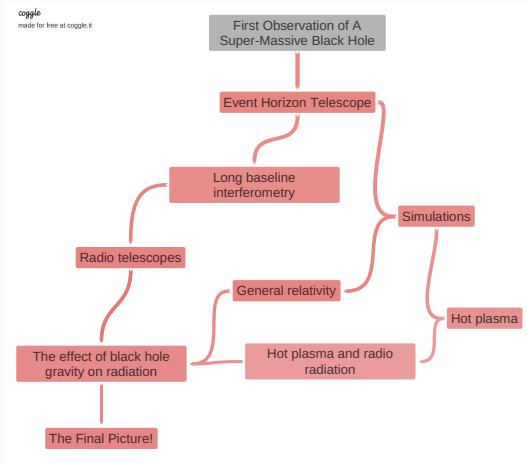


Figure 2: Black hole observations and Event Horizon Telescope, take 2.

Example: COVID-19 for a General Audience

Review of general steps:

- Build a small list of sources
- Create a map or outline
- Write for each bubble or branch
- Edit and polish the finished tract

COVID-19 for a General Audience

How do you ... *start* ... building a set of sources? The first one is a *general article* (written very well, sourced by a credible expert) for a general audience with links to technical work.

1. “5 things scientists know about COVID-19 - and 5 they’re still figuring out.” Karen Frances Eng for ideas.ted.com
2. “Tracking the Coronavirus in California.” LA Times
3. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>
4. <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-data-explorer>

COVID-19 for a General Audience

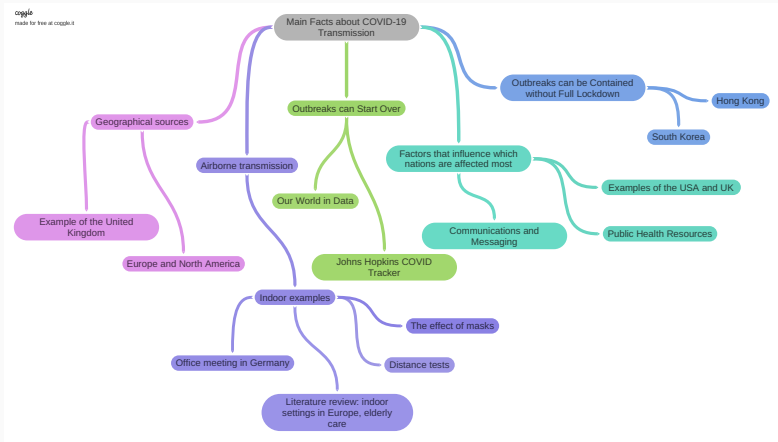


Figure 3: This is an example of a mind map of the 5 things article.

COVID-19 for a General Audience

This could be a basic strategy in this extended example:

1. Start with the 5 things article
2. Branch off to the technical work
 - What is research, and what is basic public health information
 - What is *peer-reviewed* versus non-peer-reviewed work
3. Decide how much detail to keep from each branch
4. Interpret the graphs and the numbers: a few tips
 - Never neglect the axes, always...**ALWAYS** define the axes for the reader
 - When describing shapes or curves or points on a chart, always use precise language
 - Avoid vague adjectives
5. Polish: use the delete button, use metaphor where appropriate, keep details in a hierarchy

COVID-19 for a General Audience

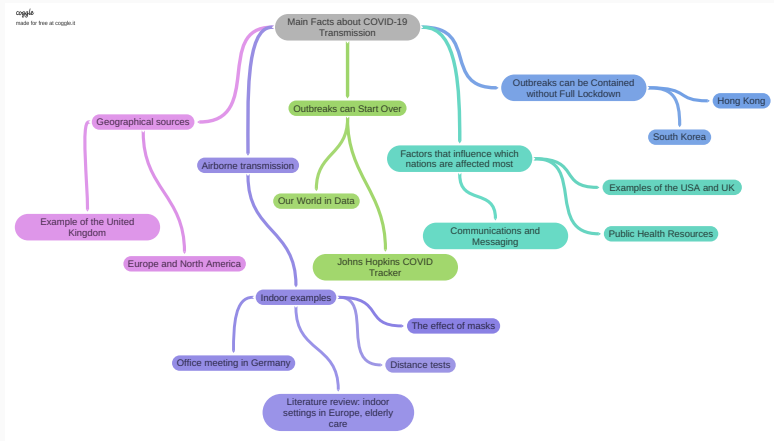


Figure 4: This is an example of a mind map of the 5 things article.

COVID-19 for a General Audience

Collaborate on Google Docs: Go to Google Docs and log in with your Whittier College credentials. Click on Shared with Me, and you should see the agenda page for today entitled Concise Writing,

2. Using the Coggle map I've created, let's start writing!

1. Group A: Pink branch
2. Group B: Purple branch
3. Group C: Teal branch
4. Group D: Blue branch
5. Dr. Hanson: Lime branch

Aaaaand...go!

Conclusion

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