

ASSIGNMENT # 4

Astro 597 – Spring 2020 Writing Workshop

As with the previous assignment, please aim to do #3 and #4 on different days.

1: TRACKING PROGRESS

Please continue to note how many words you wrote on each of 4 different days. Write me a short sentence or two about how it's been going, what's been working for you, what changes in your writing process you're experimenting with? etc — basically anything where a bit of feedback, self-reflection, and/or accountability could be useful.

2: ANALYZING STRUCTURE

Continuing the exercise you started in the last assignment (which focused only on the introduction), I'd like you to analyze a different well-written paper of your choosing (preferably one that is relevant to your own work).

Specifically, I'd like you to analyze the structure of three different types of sections: (1) the introduction; (2) a subsection that describes tasks the authors undertook; and (3) and a subsection discussing/analyzing results.

For each of these three sections, please make a bulleted list of the main point of each paragraph, described with a single sentence. As you go through this exercise, think about why each paragraph is there (in terms of advancing the authors' arguments), and how they flow from one to another. Also pay attention to the typical density of information and the pacing, imagining how both would work for a talk you were giving for a beginning grad student.

Note that many published papers may not have done the best possible job of structuring their work on the sentence, paragraph, or section levels. If you find yourself questioning the authors' choices, it might be instructive to also compare to a better-presented paper.

3: WRITE AT LEAST ONE MORE PARAGRAPH FOR THE MAIN BODY OF YOUR PAPER, ON EACH OF 2-3 SEPARATE DAYS

Continue adding paragraphs to your work from the previous week. You can choose to add to the discussion of the first figure you presented, if it was a complex one with many implications, or, you can introduce a new figure.

If you introduce a new figure, remember the standard guidelines: (1) First paragraph introduces the straightforward mechanics of the plot, as you would introduce a plot in a talk. (2) Second paragraph points out then contextualizes the most obvious feature of the plot. (3) Subsequent paragraphs point out and then discuss increasingly subtle features and/or conclusions from the plot.

If you do not have another figure to discuss, add to your “what I did” text.

4: EDIT THE PARAGRAPHS FROM #3.

On a different day, re-read the paragraphs you’ve written last week and this week, and edit them so they work as a cohesive whole. Only turn in the edited versions of the new paragraphs, however. Flag which one you’re most satisfied with and which one you’re least satisfied with.