

ASSIGNMENT # 1

Astro 597 – Winter 2020 Writing Workshop

For the following activities, *please set a timer and spend no more than 5 minutes on each*. You will not be judged on the quality of the writing, so do not obsess over these — I just want to get a sense of your goals and habits so that I can help support you through this class.

1: WHAT WRITING ARE YOU WORKING ON?

Please write a short paragraph telling me what paper or proposal you want to work on during the quarter. Include a high level description of the project, its current state, and how experienced you are at writing this type of document.

2: WHAT IS YOUR WRITING PROCESS?

Please write a short paragraph describing your typical interaction with “writing” – is it easy for you but you struggle with editing? is it challenging in English but not your native language? what works well for you when writing? what thought processes or habits get in your way? Please include anything in particular that you want to improve upon during this quarter.

3: EDITING PRACTICE

Please edit the following text:

PNe are typically identified by searching for objects with bright OIII lines using the difference of on- and off-band narrow-band photometry followed up with spectroscopic observations to confirm the candidates are PNe as opposed to HII regions or Wolf-Rayet stars which also emit strong OIII lines.

4: PAY ATTENTION TO THE WRITING THAT YOU'RE READING...

In the next few weeks, I'll have you start analyzing the writing in papers you're reading. As you read papers from astro-ph (which you should be doing regularly), put aside ones that you found particularly easy to follow or hard to follow, so that you'll have examples on hand to use in future assignments. I'm always looking for examples of effective or ineffective writing, so please share if you find anything that falls in either extreme!

5: STARTING TO THINK ABOUT YOUR LARGER PROJECT

This class starts with learning the nitty gritty of editing at the sentence level, then builds up to paragraphs, and then the document as a whole. However, it's useful to start thinking about the last of these early, to help focus your work. I will be talking about these issues in detail later in the class, but in the meanwhile, you may want to read "Finding your story" from Stephen Beard's book (highly recommended), and the set of introductory chapters from Schimel's book.