

Reading scientific papers

Learning outcome: Assess scientific papers critically (niv. 5)

Practical guidelines

Group discussions

- Come prepared to the discussion session: you've read the papers and have given it some thought
- Assistance to all group discussions is mandatory
- Each group is pre-assigned (no free choice), see list
- Groups are called by the name of the room they meet, see list
- Each group has one lecturer as coach, see list
- In all sessions, you have 45 minutes per paper
- The first session (Mace 2014) is a trial session, so no reporting is required
- Use the questions below as a guidance for your group discussions and as the basis for your report (only the second set of questions)

Individual reporting

- Each student reports on just ONE of the five papers (Theme 1 to 5).
- Which paper you report on is pre-assigned and indicated in the list
- Your report only includes answers to the second set of questions (on the critical evaluation)
- Your report contains a maximum of 500 words
- Submit your report through the Turnitin link for Assignment 1 in Brightspace
- The deadline for submitting your report is one week after the paper discussion:
 - Paper 1: Thursday 12 September
 - Paper 2: Thursday 19 September
 - Paper 3: Thursday 26 September
 - Paper 4: Thursday 3 October
 - Paper 5: Thursday 10 October
- In our weekly discussion sessions, we will also discuss the IBPES 2019-Synthesis Report for Policy Makers. This is an important working document. We will read one of the 4 sections of this document (A,B,C,D) in each of our weekly discussion meeting. You are not expected to do any individual reporting on the IPBES document.

Reading tips

- Order of reading: first the title and abstract, then look at figures, then read the entire paper
- While reading: mark the most important findings, note down any question you have, note down the doubts you have on the reasoning and logic

Questions for the discussion sessions

- Questions to help understanding the paper
 - Is this a research paper (based on new data & analysis of this), a review (that summarizes and discusses published papers) or a perspectives/opinion paper (a more free form in which personal viewpoints on authors are important)
 - What are the main conclusions or messages?
 - How did the authors reach these?

- Questions to help a critical evaluation of the paper (**your report is based on these questions**)
 - Do you think that the conclusions are justified? In other words, would you have come to the same conclusions, based on the information provided? Why (not)?
 - Do the authors take a position in a scientific or conservation debate? If so, what position and does this affect the conclusion? Why (not)?
 - Do you think the paper is clearly written? Why (not)?