

Rubric for Reading the Literature

As you read the paper, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What did I learn by reading the title?
2. What did I learn by reading the abstract?
3. What did I learn from the rest of the paper: See below.

In a brief written analysis of the paper you should:

1. Identify the context of the paper: Summarize the *Big Picture* aspect of the work.
2. Indicate what work by others was critical to the current paper: Identify 2-3 critical background references.
3. Identify the central hypothesis that is to be tested.
4. Indicate preparative experiments: What did they have to do before they could do the critical experiments?
5. Indicate the critical experiments that test the hypothesis: Which is the most important figure or table in the paper?
6. Outline the major conclusions reached.
7. Indicate what evidence the major conclusions are based upon.
8. Discuss the reproducibility of the experimental data and how might this affect the conclusions that are reached for each experiment.
9. Identify the controls that are used.
10. Discuss the potential pitfalls of the techniques used.