

# WRITING ASSIGNMENT: ABSTRACT FOR A SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE\*

## The Cain Project in Engineering and Professional Communication

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### Abstract

In this assignment from a writing course for upper-level bioscience majors at Rice University, students write an abstract for a published research article in which the abstract has been deleted. Lectures and in-class discussions on the disease (Rett Syndrome) and the molecule (MeCP2) described in the article are provided before the assignment to help familiarize students with the general topic.

## 1 Overview

For this assignment you will write an abstract for the article, “Insight into Rett Syndrome: MeCP2 Levels Display Tissue- and Cell-specific Differences and Correlate with Neuronal Maturation,” which is available in your course packets.

## 2 Purpose

Bioscience students and professionals are constantly acquiring new knowledge in their discipline by reading current research. This assignment will help you to learn effective reading strategies and how to accurately and concisely abstract a research article.

## 3 Task

In your course packet, we have provided a published article without its abstract. Read the article, applying the strategies for effective reading of scientific articles<sup>1</sup> that we discussed in class. Make notes about the main points of the article. Craft your notes into a concise, clear, complete abstract of 225 to 250 words. Be sure that your abstract answers the following questions:

- What was the question or problem to be solved?
- Why was this question important?
- What method or approach was used to answer the question?
- What results were obtained?
- What do the results mean?

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<sup>1</sup>"Manual for Writing Mentors" <<http://cnx.org/content/m15909/latest/>>

## 4 Evaluation

Here are the criteria we will use to assess your abstract:

- Summarizes the main points of the article accurately and completely
- Adheres to conventions for abstract content (225 to 250 words)
- Adheres to sentence-level correctness (e.g., grammar, punctuation, usage, and so on)