

Writing Assignment: Astronomy in the News

The Story: Your uncle is really impressed that you are an expert on astronomy now! He just read an article in the newspaper about a recent astronomical discovery, and he wants you to explain it to him.

The Assignment: Find an article about an astronomical discovery in the news that has been published within the last few months (since **August 25, 2021** when you started this class). Write a summary for your uncle of what this article is all about. You are welcome to use other online resources to help you learn about the topic, but be sure to cite any source you use. Some things you might want to include are:

- What was the discovery?
- When was the discovery made, and by whom?
- What kind of object is the discovery about? (planet, star, galaxy, etc.) Did we talk about it in class? Look up this type of object and tell me more about it.
- What new thing did we learn?
- Does the discovery contradict any ideas we have about the universe? If so, describe how and why.
- Are there still questions to be answered before we fully understand the situation? What are they? Who will find the answers?
- Why is the discovery important?

Here are some examples of articles from the past (don't use them, they're too old):

<http://www.foxnews.com/science/2016/10/26/scientists-to-study-strange-star-for-signs-intelligent-life.html>

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/14/497965415/the-universe-has-almost-10-times-more-galaxies-than-we-thought>

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/08/24/health/proxima-b-centauri-rocky-planet-habitable-zone-neighbor-star/index.html>

These articles usually start out "Astronomers have discovered..." or "Data from the Hubble (or whichever) Space Telescope has shown that..."

The Details:

- Length: 700 words
- Citations: include the URL of the article you chose and any others you used in your research
- Deadline: **First Draft** (25% of grade) submitted on Blackboard by **Monday Nov 29**. Final draft (75% of grade) will be submitted on Blackboard, date TBA

The Purpose of this Assignment: To demonstrate an ability to explain a news article about astronomy and put it in the context of what we've learned in class, and to explain the importance of the discovery to a non-scientist.

Writing Rubric

Evaluation Areas	Points	Description
Coherence		
Relevancy / Following Instructions	4	Does the paper answer the main questions that are asked in the instructions? Is it clear what the point of the paper is? Does the paper stay on topic and address the main point, without wandering?
Structure/Flow	4	Is there a introduction, body, and conclusion? Does the paper flow chronologically? Are there good transitions between paragraphs? Does each paragraph represent a main idea?
Content		
Examples/Evidence	4	Do explain your claims clearly and in detail? Do you support your claims with evidence from the literature? Do you explain how your evidence connects to your main point?
Context	2	Do you create a clear and successful explanation for your uncle, putting the discovery in the larger context of what we know about space?
Plagiarism	2	Plagiarism less than 15% (as reported by TurnItIn)
Structure		
Length	3	Meet or exceed word count: 3 80%-99% of word count: 2 50%-79% of word count: 1 less than 50%: 0
Spelling/Grammar	1	Are there few spelling/grammar mistakes?
Citations	1	Are there URLs at the end of the paper? Are the citations relevant?
Total Points:	21	