

Research Paper (35 points)

Topic - Write a research paper on any topic in Biogeography. Your topic area should be focused. Select your topic according to your interest. I am open to many topics. Be certain to clear your topic with me before you begin. Here is a preliminary list of a few potential topics to get you thinking:

- 1) The distribution of any plant or animal and its related ecosystem (include the process that produced those distributions);
- 2) The distribution of any species and how it has changed over time;
- 3) Island biogeography in the Galapagos Islands (or any "island");
- 4) The role of disturbance in shaping the biogeography of a particular region;
- 5) Interacting physical controls on the geographic distribution of any species (or of a specific region);
- 6) Beringia and the spread of species from the Nearctic to the Palearctic;
- 7) Limiting factors for the dispersal of a particular species;
- 8) Ecological succession and species change in a specific biome (or even more specific, an ecosystem within a biome such as a northern midlatitude field);
- 9) Fire ecology, biodiversity, and ecosystem health in Yellowstone National Park (or any region);
- 10) Fire or wind or flooding or other physical disturbance on the distribution of life;
- 11) Speciation and distribution of any species;
- 12) Compare and contrast the biodiversity of two communities, ecosystems, or biomes;
- 13) Biological interactions and the distribution of life within any region or for a given species;
- 14) Evolution, speciation, and extinction of one or more species (or species within a region);
- 15) Humans as a force in the distribution of species (focus on few case studies or even a single species);
- 16) Humans as a force in the distribution, evolution, and extinction of species in a region;
- 17) The implications of shifting continents or changing climate on species or a region;
- 18) The speciation of any species i.e. cichlids in Lake Victoria;
- 19) The extinction of any species or group of species in a given area;
- 20) Biogeographic responses to climate cycles;
- 21) The biogeography of any specific highland;
- 22) Island biogeography and the evolution insular biotas;
- 23) The dispersal of any species;
- 24) The dispersal and success of an invasive species;
- 25) An in-depth coverage of a single biome.

Paper Length - The paper must be at least **8 typewritten, double-spaced pages** in length, excluding references, maps, and photos. If your paper is not at least pages long (within a paragraph or two at most), I will take points off for not fully developing the topic. Include, at a minimum, **two illustrations** and **one map** in your paper. The map and illustration must be neat and clearly readable sure to reference the illustration and map in the body of the paper. It does not make any sense to include an illustration and not even mention it. For example, refer to it in your paper as "see Figure One", having the map or illustration labeled as "Figure One". Be certain to include the source of the illustration. If you took it from a website, correctly cite the source. The illustrations must be neat and clearly readable. Do not use a bizarre font or a point size greater than 12 to make your paper appear longer. Your margins must be set to 1" on all four sides.

General Paper Rules- Your paper must have a **purpose statement, introduction, body** (preferably with subheadings for better organization), **conclusion, and bibliography** with illustrations and maps inserted throughout the text and not in an appendix at the end. The introduction clearly outlines the paper. The conclusion neatly sums all the major important points that you made in the paper. Do not bring new information into the conclusion. Always avoid straying from the purpose statement. Keep the paper organized with good flow. Use biogeography terminology from the articles and lectures. The paper must have, at a minimum, **eight** bibliographic entries in a correct format. Do not mix citation styles. The most common styles are MLA, APA, and Chicago. Complete citations for Internet sources and illustrations must be included. Use at least **three references** taken from a primary

source - i.e., original research reported in a journal or periodical. Do not use encyclopedias, Wikipedia, sensational magazines, nonacademic websites, or reviews. No more than one reference can be from a newspaper. Once you have found one good article on your topic, use the article's reference page in order to help find source material. Please staple papers in the upper left-hand corner. No Folders! Make sure that you make a **copy** of your paper. In the event that your paper is misplaced (which should never happen), you will have a back-up copy. It will be very difficult for you to prove to me that your paper was lost. Without a back-up paper, I will doubt that you completed the paper. Do not email me your paper!

Presentation (10 points)

You must make a presentation from your paper to the class. The topic will be communicated to the class via a computer presentation program. Your presentation will last for a total of **8 minutes**. You will have to answer one question pertaining to the presentation from the class or from myself. In the event the presentation is short, I may ask more questions than one. Your talk should be informative and precise. You will be graded on your ability to concisely deliver the paper in the allotted 8 minutes. Pay attention to the time cards and stay on track. If the card states "one minute remaining", go straight to your conclusions. I will give you one minute of grace time. After one minute of presenting too long, I will tell you to stop. Be organized! I expect you to use numerous pictures graphics and maps to help illustrate points. Do not write out long sentences on your overheads. Use **bullet points**. Do not read your paper. Be concise. The presentation will be graded on: content, layout and organization, preparedness, response to question, and communication ability. You must present from a **flash drive** or disk. Do not present from your P-drive. It takes too long to access the site. We can't waste time, as five students will present in one class period. You must present in the order that you are given. Failure to present on your day will result in no points awarded for the presentation. The day of your presentation, turn in this Presentation Grading Requirements form with your title and name written in the space provided. This allows me to know that you read the directions.

Presentation Grading Requirements:

Presentation Title: _____

Presenters Name: _____

1. Clear purpose:
2. Clear introduction and conclusion:
3. Student preparedness:
4. Adequate number of graphics to illustrate major points (graphics quality counts):
5. Included one map/air photo to illustrate research locations:
6. Presentation covered topic:
7. Student supported his/her findings:
8. Good oral communication skills:
9. Presentation length (do not go too long or short – you will have a one minute grace period):
10. Overall insight and original thought of the presentation was: excellent; good; average; below average.
11. Overall quality of the presentation was: excellent; good; average; below average.
12. **Your presentation grade is:** _____

Basic Guide to Research Paper Writing

- 1) Write an introduction which clearly tells the reader the major points of discussion in your paper. The introduction explains how you will accomplish the purpose statement.
- 2) Have a purpose statement somewhere in the first paragraph of your introduction. Keep the purpose statement focused with no more than a few major objectives.
- 3) Write clearly, concisely, and professionally. Do not use informal language, such as "we, you, they, them, our, yours, you know, or ok". Avoid contractions.
- 4) Do not plagiarize!
 - a) Completely original ideas need no reference.
 - b) Things that are common knowledge need no reference. Example: World War II ended in 1945.
 - c) Specific data sources must be referenced. Example: In the last 45 years, over 80 percent of Central America's rainforests have been cut (de Blij and Muller 2014).
 - d) Quotations exceeding one-half sentence in length must be referenced by source and page number.
 - e) Borrowed ideas which are not common knowledge must be referenced by source. Example: Some scientists feel that 2-4-5-T is a harmless product (Smith 2014).
- 5) Include a bibliography or references cited page (example style).

Owen, O., Chiras, D., and Reganold, J. 2014. *Natural resource conservation – 10th edition*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey:Prentice Hall.
- 6) Citations should be employed whenever you use someone else's work. Always put citations at the end of your sentence and inside of the period. For example: Ecotourism has accounted for approximately \$100 million of revenue per year in Costa Rica (Smith 2014). The following is an example of a citation style with one, two, or multiple authors: One author - (Smith 2014); Two Authors - (Smith and Jones 2014); Multiple Authors - (Smith et. al. 2014). Direct Quotations (which I do not encourage) - (Smith 2014, 26).
- 7) Use all of your sources in the bibliography. When you use all the sources, the bibliography is technically called References Cited. Do not over use one source. Evenly cite materials from the bibliography.
- 8) Do not overuse direct quotations. Think for yourself and at least reword and cite the source. If the direct quotation is longer than two lines, single space the quote and indent it on either side by an additional inch.
- 9) The paper should flow well and be very organized. If you are having trouble organizing your paper use subheadings. The subheading should appear in the introduction statement.
- 10) Include a one paragraph conclusion. The conclusion must summarize the important points of the paper. Do not introduce new material in the conclusion
- 11) Be insightful. Do not simply report cited knowledge - rethink the information, but support your opinion.

PAPER GRADING CRITERIA *(Please staple this sheet to the back of your paper)*

Biogeography Paper Grading Criteria	
Expectations	Comment and Points Deducted
Descriptive title	
Purpose statement; what is the point of the paper?	
Reference format (book/magazine); Avoid encyclopedia or Wikipedia or sensational sources; be careful not to plagiarize -- use citations; use at least eight references; three references must be taken from a primary source.	
Introduction -- your one-paragraph introduction should clearly outline the paper; how do you plan to achieve your purpose?	
Is the topic relevant and legitimate (ask yourself, "Does my topic make sense?"); if the paper is not relevant, there will be problems elsewhere	
Overall insight and development of paper (avoid straight reporting -- be insightful); was the purpose of this paper clearly conveyed?	
General grammar, clarity, linkage, and style (when grammar and clarity are poor, they deduct from the paper's content); have someone proofread your paper	
Include one map and two picture/graphics or visual aids	
How well is the paper organized? Does it flow?	
Conclusion -- your one-paragraph conclusion should summarize the important points of the paper; do not introduce new material in the conclusion	
Paper is not about Biogeography	
Paper length (8 pages, using a standard 12 point size font; papers shorter than the assigned length cannot be adequately developed)	
No Bibliography (short bibliography)	
No citations and/or inadvertent plagiarizing	
Late papers (6% per day or 3 points out of 45/day)	
Your grade on this paper is : _____	

General Comments: