**Name:**

**Taking Notes on Scientific Articles**

Work in groups of 2-3. Each student should fill out this handout and turn it in.

**PART 1.** Skim the article quickly. Don’t get distracted by words you don’t know, but try to get a general sense of the article. One way of skimming is to read quickly over the article, paying attention to headers, sub-headers, and topic sentences. It’s okay to skip over large sections of text without reading them or understanding them.

Briefly, what is the topic of the article?

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**PART 2** As you read the article in-depth, follow the steps below. As you follow the steps and read the article, make sure to highlight important phrases and sentences of the article, circle words you don’t know, and answer the questions below. Really take your time.

**Step 1:** Read the title. It should summarize the work the article.

**Step 2:** Read the abstract carefully and try to understand it. Abstracts are difficult to read because they have to summarize the entire article. At this point, you should know if this article is going to help you answer your research question.

Why was this research done?

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**Step 3:** Picture time! Flip through the article and look at the figures, illustrations, and tables. You will later read the methods and results to fully understand the figures and experimental design. See if you can understand what the article is looking at by looking at the figures.

**Step 4:** Read the Introduction and answers the questions below.

When was previous work on this topic done and by whom?

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Why was their work important and how does it lead to the work being done in this paper?

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What is the goal of this paper?

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**Step 5:** Read the Methods. How did the authors do this study? Where did they do it?

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Can you draw a diagram of their experimental design or a flow chart of the steps?

**Step 6:** Read the results. What data did the researchers obtain and what does it show?

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**Step 7:** Now read the discussion. This may be the most important section, because it explains the results!

Why does the data show what they show? How does the analysis of the data relate to the goals of the paper? What is the significance of their findings?

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**Step 8**: Summarize the key points you learned from the article.

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**Step 9:** Go back to the Introduction. Are there any cited facts that interest you? Would you want to follow-up on these for your future research? List the citations in the form of (Author, Year) that you want to follow-up on.

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**Extra Credit**

Can you write the complete citation in APA style? The citation should be in the following format: Author(s), Date of publication, Title, Journal, Volume #, Issue #.

*Example*

Smith, F.S., & Cohen, B.H. (1999). The biology behind the cat’s meow: vocal chords in calico cats and lions. *Animal Physiology, 5*.

Write yours below:

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