

NEWS FLASH: MARGINS DISCOVERY!

AN ORAL PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT

GOALS

- To explore cutting-edge research accomplished through the MARGINS program.
- To present scientific information in a clear and concise fashion.
- To develop reading skills, including interpreting and synthesizing scientific information.

GUIDELINES

Continental margins are the transition zone from continents to the deep sea. Active margins coincide with plate boundaries, marking an abrupt change in oceanic bathymetry. At passive margins, the sea floor gradually deepens across the continental shelf, slope, and rise. The MARGINS program promotes continental margin research through funding by the National Science Foundation. Much of this cutting-edge research relates directly to our course.

Your task is to interpret one MARGINS study that you find particularly interesting. Describe the study in a two to four minute oral presentation to our class. You may put up one—and only one—visual aid as an overhead or PowerPoint figure. Approach this presentation as a “news flash,” a feature presentation made on an evening news program. Note, however, that your audience for this news program consists of your peers in our class. As such, you may presume some background knowledge that your average person on the street would not have.

Like a news program feature, your presentation should have the following characteristics:

- Attract and hold your audience’s attention.
- Report on a relevant and interesting topic.
- Employ a smooth delivery, with extensive eye contact and minimal reliance on notes.
- Fit in a tight time frame, in this case two to four minutes.
- Start with an introduction and end with a conclusion.
- Contain clear, concise, and complete scientific explanations.
- Recognize the sources of your information, both verbally and written on your visual aids.

The MARGINS website contains a wealth of information (www.nsf-margins.org/index.html). I highly recommend that you start with the one-page descriptions that the MARGINS program refers to as “nuggets” (www.nsf-margins.org/Nuggets_Public/nuggets_public.html). These are one-page summaries of research results. Each “nugget” is focused on one project and typically contains one high-quality figure.

Both your peers and your professor will evaluate your presentation. Refer to the additional page, “Student Peer Evaluation of Presentations,” for evaluation criteria.

REFERENCES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This exercise was developed as a MARGINS Mini-Lesson by Laura Reiser Wetzel, Department of Marine Science at Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida, on May 28, 2009. It may be downloaded from <<http://serc.carleton.edu/dev/margins/minilessons/32027.html>>. Many thanks to Cindy Palinkas for helpful comments to revise assignment at the 2009 MARGINS Mini-Lessons Workshop.

STUDENT PEER EVALUATION OF PRESENTATIONS

Use the following criteria to rate each speaker on her or his presentation. Use a scale from one to five, one being the lowest and five being the highest. Scores will be averaged for each speaker. This average will make up 20% of the speaker's grade. All comments will be typed and passed along to the speaker anonymously. Please be honest and helpful in your assessments. Provided you complete these evaluations for each speaker, you will receive 10 points towards your in-class participation total.

Speaker: _____ **Topic:** _____

Content:	Low				High
1. Did the speaker demonstrate a good understanding of the material?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Was the presentation sufficiently organized and easy to follow?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Was the language used at an appropriate level? Did you understand the material?	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery:					
4. Did the student speak clearly and maintain your interest?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Did the speaker make good use of physical gestures and eye contact?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Were the visual aids used effectively and easy to absorb?	1	2	3	4	5
Additional Comments:	Total Score: _____ out of 30				

Speaker: _____ **Topic:** _____

Content:	Low				High
1. Did the speaker demonstrate a good understanding of the material?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Was the presentation sufficiently organized and easy to follow?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Was the language used at an appropriate level? Did you understand the material?	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery:					
4. Did the student speak clearly and maintain your interest?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Did the speaker make good use of physical gestures and eye contact?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Were the visual aids used effectively and easy to absorb?	1	2	3	4	5
Additional Comments:	Total Score: _____ out of 30				