

Sinclair Wash — Field Notes

ENV 226L · Ecological sampling · bring this on a clipboard

Names: _____ Group: _____ Date: _____ Weather: _____

1 Observations — ten minutes, nothing but what is there

- Where plants have come back, and where they have not
- What the bank looks like where it is bare — steep? crumbling? packed hard?
- Where water has obviously run recently · where people and dogs walk
- Rubbish, and where it collects · anything planted on purpose

The rule: if your sentence contains *because*, *due to*, *caused by* or *shows that*, it is not an observation yet. Just write what you can see, hear or count.

[illegible]

2 Three questions

Pick your three most interesting observations. Write a question for each. It only counts if **data could answer it**.

Too big: "Why is the wash like this?" · **Good:** "Is there more plant cover on the gentle bank than the steep bank?"

Q1

Q2

Q3

Your question

Step 3 · pick the one your group most wants to answer

THE QUESTION – one sentence

THE HYPOTHESIS — your best explanation. It must contain the word "because."

We think there is more cover on gentle banks **because** seedlings get washed off steep ones before they can root.

PREDICTION — what you would see in the data if you are right

AND IF YOU ARE WRONG — what result would change your mind?

This is the hard one, and the most important. If you cannot describe a result that would make you abandon your hypothesis, it is not testable yet. Go back and sharpen it.

Sketch the site

Rough map. Mark the bank, the path, where water runs, and where you noticed the difference your question is about.

Keep this sheet. You will do these same four steps for the greenhouse experiment later in the semester — question, hypothesis, prediction, and what would prove you wrong — with much less help than you got today.