

## SciShow Assignment

On YouTube there has been a growing interest in short, fun, and informative videos that provide science education to the public. Your assignment is to create your own 2-3 minute video! Much of the writing you do for science classes is aimed at a scientific audience, and the writing style tends to be fairly technical. It is also important, however, that scientists be able to communicate scientific findings to a more general, non-scientific audience. Your goal is to make a short video that effectively communicates scientific research about animal behavior to the general public.

Some great examples of these videos can be found on the SciShow channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/scishow?feature=watch>

For example, this is a particularly good episode featuring animal behavior:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bawYH03V4Yc>

I also highly recommend the BrainScoop: <http://www.youtube.com/user/thebrainscoop>, and Smarter Every Day: <http://www.youtube.com/user/destinws2> (Important note: under no circumstances is it acceptable to do anything that can possibly harm any living creature).

For this assignment you are going to write an essay and then create a video on some aspect of animal behavior that is of interest to you. Some of the best SciShow-like videos tend to be quirky and off the beaten track. For example, some good ones have talked about slug slime (how slugs communicate with their slime trails), “handedness” in snakes (i.e. can snakes be left-handed or right-handed even though they don’t have hands? The answer is yes!), and how ducks can sleep with one eye opened (this lets one half of the brain sleep, while the other half can scan for predators). You can get ideas from things you are interested in, material you have learned about in class lectures, readings, or current behavioral journals. Once you pick a topic, you need to do some research so that you know what is known about the topic.

The SciShow Assignment consists of two parts:

- 1) Technical overview of your topic. This short essay (one page) should give an overview of the general problem or issue you have chosen. You need to summarize the technical research you have uncovered and cite your sources (at least 2). This section should be aimed at a scientific audience.
- 2) SciShow video. You need to create your video, which should be about 2-3 minutes in length. The restricted length of a SciShow video means that you must get to the point right away. After introducing an observation, the bulk of the video should involve an interpretation of that observation. Your goal is to convey the results of scientific research to an interested but non-scientific audience. Be sure to define scientific terms and avoid anthropomorphism.

It is fine to have other people act, or help out, in the making of your video.

However, all of the thinking about animal behavior, the writing of the transcript, the design and conception of the video, **MUST** be your own original work. You will upload your video to the University of Wyoming Animal Behavior YouTube channel. Make sure your video is marked as “unlisted”. This way, only members of our class can view the video. At the end of the semester, I may mark all appropriate and high-quality videos as public, so that anyone searching YouTube can see them and marvel at your work. If you prefer for your video not to be listed as public, that is no problem, but please let me know when you turn in your assignment. I will distribute the details of the class YouTube channel prior to the assignment due date.

This assignment is due on April 28th.