

ESCI 197C INTRODUCTION TO FIELD RESEARCH

Brilliant scientists stand out from the rest of us largely by their knack for asking insightful questions. Asking questions that are both relevant and answerable often is the most difficult task in the study of field environments. This exercise will help you face the challenge by helping you to observe nature and to ask questions about your observations. Find an area that is as free from human influences and artifacts as possible. For ten minutes, sit alone, set aside anything you brought with you, and observe your surroundings. Then start writing questions drawn from your observations. Spend the next 20 minutes writing as many questions as possible; you should try to write at least 50. Please follow the guidelines below.

- 1 Find a location that is as free as possible from anthropogenic distractions.
- 2 Question without judgment. Do not worry about asking ‘good’ questions. Even the ‘dumbest’ question might be interesting later. Let your imagination run wild: quantity of questions is more important than quality at this stage.
- 3 Write *at least* 50 questions. You can determine the ‘good’ ones later.
- 4 Ask questions about nature around you. Avoid egocentric questions like “Why cannot I ask an intelligent question?”
- 5 Enjoy yourself!