Research in Cell Biology: Analyzing Figures

BIO 201 Cell & Molecular Biology

Some of this may also be covered elsewhere, but hopefully this document will pull together information in one place to reinforce the skill of analyzing a figure.

Review the figures in the research article provided online. Think of a figure as a single experiment or a set of closely related experiments. You will notice that most figures have multiple panels (indicated by letters) that represent closely related experiments. When selecting a figure to analyze, the following questions should provide a useful guide:

What was the purpose or hypothesis of the experiment?

How was the experiment performed or accomplished? Explain the key features necessary for someone who has not read the paper to understand what was done. The following items should be clear from your description:

- the controls & variables
- what system or model was used
- what was measured and how it was analyzed (e.g. technique or method)
- what was observed

What conclusion was reached based on the results?

The article assignment walks you through two figures from the article and I will have a review session late in the semester to help you with Figure 6 which will be on Exam IV.