

Writing your Vignette – some commonly asked questions

Who is the audience?

The primary audience for *Vignettes* is students taking their first upper-level Geomorphology or Physical Geography class. The background of such students will vary widely – a few will have taken many geology and/or geography courses while for most, this may be only their second or third natural science course. The *Vignettes* should stand alone and not presuppose content or definitions from the textbook.

What is the purpose of *Vignettes*?

Vignettes are case studies for teaching undergraduate students. We anticipate that Geomorphology faculty will select and assign *Vignettes* and that students doing research will find and use *Vignettes* as sources and an entrée into the literature.

What style of writing should I use?

The *Vignettes* already in the collection are written in a variety of styles. Some are informal and conversational; others are more formal and written in a classic, scientific style. We encourage authors to write in a style that is comfortable for them and accessible for students taking Geomorphology for the first time. A common suggestion during peer review is the use of parentheticals to define terms likely to be unfamiliar to novice students. Many reviewers comment that the most effective *Vignettes* use short, focused paragraphs and subheadings. It is most important that *Vignettes* conceptualize the work in a broader context, telling the student why the research matters.

Can I reuse figures from published papers?

Yes, if they are yours and you have not signed away the copyright. If the figures are not yours or you have signed away the copyright, then either you'll need to modify the figure or seek permission from the copyright holder or find another figure to use.

Can I reuse text from published papers?

Yes, you can modify existing text but only if you are able to alter the text so that it's understandable by a beginning student in Geomorphology and is readable over the web.

How should I cite references?

This is a personal decision. Some authors cite references "in text" following the style of a journal article. Other authors provide a bibliography at the end of the *Vignette* but do not place citations in the text. Either style is acceptable as long as the ideas of others are properly acknowledged and a list of references is provided so that interested students can find related readings. References don't count in the word limit. It's best to cite a mix of general and specific references and always try and cite the classic papers so as to give the students an entrée into the relevant literature. Five to ten references is appropriate.

Can I refer students to a paper I've written about the topic of my *Vignette*?

Absolutely, please ensure that the *Vignette* includes a reference to such a paper; it's fine and encouraged to direct interested students to the original source(s) of material described in the *Vignette*.