

## ON GRADING TERM PAPERS

These are some of the things I think about when I read and grade term papers. They are also among the things reviewers will consider when they read your manuscripts submitted to GSA Bulletin or JGR.

1. Can I identify the hypothesis being tested in this paper; what is the problem being addressed or attacked?
2. Can I identify the original thinking and contribution in this paper?
3. If the paper contains a literature review, is the review relevant and useful?
4. Does the paper contain some of your thinking and opinions? Are they well supported by literature, calculations, or data?
5. Are facts clearly separated from opinions and interpretations?
6. Is the paper clearly and efficiently written? Are paragraphs paragraphs; are sentences sentences; are nouns nouns (not adverbs and adjectives)?
7. Is the writing well organized and sufficiently condensed (remove the filler and fluff!).
8. Has there been a substantial effort to make an individual contribution of new data, modeling, simulation, calculation or gathering of ideas?
9. Does the paper make a good use of graphs and figures to reduce text and enhance understanding?
10. Would a journalist, biologist or English major be able to understand the problem and contribution?
11. Should the author be proud of having his/her/its name on this manuscript?

**ADVICE:** Keep a small collection of professional papers that you believe are well-written and easy to understand; identify the good points of those papers and emulate the style. Do not list and describe things in your papers; organize and explain major points. In the summary remind the reader of the hypothesis, the tests, the results, and your conclusions.