

BioNB 4340
Writing assignment #1
Due Monday, 1 Feb. 2010

Choose a behavior (any behavior). It can be found in any animal, including humans. Describe the behavior clearly and concisely and present an hypothesis to answer the question “What causes individuals to exhibit the behavior?” at each of four levels of analysis. Then pick one level and give at least two hypotheses to explain the occurrence of the behavior at that level and outline a test of your alternatives.

Length: ~1000 words (figures/tables OK).

References: not required, but include them if they help. Be sure to cite papers in some consistent and appropriate fashion.

A few potential behaviors, in case you're not sure where to begin:

- Group living in meerkats
- Flocking among wintering starlings
- Cavity-nesting by woodpeckers
- Begging by nestling birds
- Siblicide by nestling herons
- Morning sickness
- Broken-wing display by parental birds
- Anting behavior
- Sleep
- Dreaming
- Play