

4.211J/11.016J  
Natural Processes Paper  
Refining and Combining Observations

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Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication

# Terms of Assignment

<b>Raw Materials</b>	<b>Questions Posed</b>
Your site on early maps of Boston: natural features on your site itself.....rivers or streams, ponds, hills and valleys	Did these features (or the absence of them) influence the settlement of your site?
Your site's location in relation to the natural features of Boston as a whole	Did this context influence the development of your site?
On site itself: signs of pre-urban landscape: topography, or water features; signs of ongoing natural processes of air, earth, water, and life (for example, light and wind; water flow and erosion; plant growth and animal movements)	How do these relate to larger environmental issues (lectures, <u>The Granite Garden</u> )?

# Preparation: Two Halves of Process

## Starting (Expansion)

Interpret assignment

Notes

Ideas

Review of materials

“Writing for yourself”



## Finishing (Contraction)

Organization

Transitions

Flow

Target to audience and  
purpose

“Writing for others”

# Paper should be well-organized with a central thesis

- Assignment:

Successful papers are well organized, cite specific examples to make each point, put examples in context, and are illustrated. In organizing your paper, focus on the features you found and the broader issues they raise. Go beyond mere description. Choose your examples carefully and discuss their significance.

- Assignment guide:

Your thesis will directly answer the central question of this assignment: ***How have natural processes shaped your site? What broader issues about how cities are shaped are raised by your findings?***

# ...to be avoided...

- An inventory:  
a list of features (even if engaging, and even if organized by air, earth, water, life)
- Bullet points: list of observations followed by potential issues, mechanically (“in single file”)
- An issue briefing:  
discussion of broader urban environmental concerns without connections to site observations
- “Some Assembly Required”:  
observations jammed into wider ideas that don’t fit

# Uncovering organic connections

- **Explain** how you know what you know
- **Explore** different directions: consciously, deliberately use multiple directions of inquiry → see exercise in next slide
- **Connect** the dots: always explain implications and assumptions
- **Use** common sense

## Enriching paper content: try different directions and perspectives

<i>[State ideas and relationships in full sentences]</i>	<b>What category does it fall into?</b>	<b>What do you know about it from maps or generally?</b>	<b>Does it raise a question?</b>	<b>What details might be found/could you explain?</b>	<b>.Is it a problem for which there may be a solution, or vice-versa?</b>	<b>Does it occur at a larger scale?</b>
<b>Observation:</b>						
<b>Question:</b>						
<b>Knowledge:</b>						
<b>Category:</b> (such as air, water, earth, life)						

# Maps and other images go with text

- Historical map required
- Field notes map may be incorporated
- Images with captions
- Integrated into text
- Attributions
- (SEE CITATION GUIDE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT)

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