NAME: _____ DATE: _____ CLASS PERIOD: _____

DISSECT AN ABSTRACT!

A closer look at science writing

Human Involvement in Food Webs: Abstract*

[1]Human involvement in food webs has been profound, bringing about enormous and disproportionate losses of large apex predators on land and in water. [2]The losses have modified or even eliminated concatenations of indirect interactions propagating from predators to herbivores to plants, *inter alia*. [3]Food webs are a synthesis of bottom-up energy and nutrient flow from plant producers to consumers and top-down regulation of producers by consumers. [4]The trophic cascade is the simplest top-down interaction and accounts for a great deal of what is known about food webs. [5]In three-link cascades, predators suppress herbivores, releasing plants. [6]In longer cascades, predators can suppress smaller mesopredators, releasing their prey animals. [7]Hunting, fishing, and whaling have brought parallel losses of large apex predators to food webs. [8]Without apex predators, smaller mesopredators have often become superabundant, sometimes with unprecedented suppression of their prey, extinctions, and endangerment. [9]Flourishing mesopredators also can reverse the web regulation and suppress apex predators that have become rare owing to hunting and fishing. [10]This can prevent fisheries recovery and lead to persistent alternative ecosystem states. [11]Although food-web modules of large animals are increasingly well understood, the parts of webs consisting of small inconspicuous organisms, such as mutualists and parasites, and webs in obscure places, such as in the soil, are much of the challenge of future research.

* Strong, D.R. and Frank, K.T. 2010. Human involvement in food webs. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, Vol 35: 1-23.

1. **Write your assigned sentence here:**

2. **Circle any words that you don't know at all.**

3. **<u>Underline</u> any words that you think are important to understanding the meaning of your sentence (you might have some words circled AND underlined).**

4. **Construct meaning before you look anything up!** What do you *think* the sentence is trying to say?

5. **Identify each word that you circled in step 2 as a "science" or "non-science" word, and use your computer to research and then write its definition.**

Word	"Science" or "non-science" word?	Definition

6. **Now, rewrite the sentence in a way that you think you and your peers could easily understand.**

7. **What does your sentence say about humans and the way that they impact food webs?**

8. **The rest of this paper is about 23 pages long. What purpose do you think the abstract serves?**

9. **A) Abstracts usually contain some general background information, a bit of an explanation of the methods used by the scientists, some idea of what the scientists discovered during their research, and a summary of how their findings fit into the bigger picture. Which part of the abstract do you think is represented by your sentence? How do you know?**

10. **There is a part of the abstract (from the parts listed in Question 9) that seems to be missing. Which one do you think it is? What does that tell you about this paper as a whole?**