

Every statement in the overview includes an attribution (author reference and verb highlighted) to show how I make sure readers know every point or piece of information is theirs, not an idea of mine.

Sarah Perrault

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O&R example on Margulis & Case

The header includes my name, the deadline, and the assignment

Headings identify sections and provide word counts

The overview gives only their main ideas. Each paragraph states one idea (underlined) and provides a little detail about it.

Overview (196 words)

In "The Germs of Life," Margulis and Case makes three overall points.

First, they argue that bacteria are important for life. They describe what they consider a dangerous myth that that bacteria are bad and should be eliminated whenever possible, and counter this myth by describing how humans not only tolerate but even rely on bacteria for our own health, for animals' health, and for the health of the environments in which we live.

Second, they talk about how impressive they think bacteria are because of things like how long bacteria have been around (3.8 billion years) and the extreme environments in which bacteria can live. Margulis and Case also explain different things that bacteria do in the environment, such as their role in photosynthesis, and point out that even the bacteria we normally fear, such as anthrax, have useful functions as well as their more obvious dangerous ones. Bacteria, they say, are even the source of human consciousness.

Third, they talk about bacterial evolution and mention the conclusion they reached, based on their own research, that an ancient combination of one kind of bacteria (spirochetes) with another kind is how nucleated cells came into existence.

Comment (154 words)

I have mixed feelings about this article. On the one hand, I think Margulis and Case make some good points about how important bacteria are. I remember reading some recent studies that suggest that men generally have healthier immune system than women in cultures where girls are kept cleaner than boys, because boys get exposure to a lot more bacteria and other things that toughen up their immunities. Like Margulis and Case, I think the fetish for disinfecting everything is misguided and, given how much of our bodies' functions rely on bacteria, even dangerous. On the other hand, I wish they weren't so bombastic in their claims that everyone (or, as the article makes it seem, everyone but them) is stupid on this front. Telling readers what they feel, then dissing them for feeling it, is not bound to win them any friends, or make people want to believe and trust what they say.

The comment is my personal, subjective reaction to the piece.

The number of words I give to each point in the overview roughly corresponds to how much time Margulis & Case spend on that point. The final paragraph here is shorter than the others because Margulis and Case only spend a few paragraphs on it. Since they spent more time talking about the first and second points, I do too.