

Literature-based Research Skill Development (RSD) Task 1: **Note Taking, Synthesis and Integration of Scientific Literature**

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The submission deadline for this task is 4.00pm Monday 19th March 2007 (week 4 of semester). Late submissions will be subject to marking penalties as outlined in the Human Biology IA & IB Course Handbook, 2007.

The marks allocated to this task contribute 15% towards the final grade for Human Biology IA.

Background:

Part of being a sound scientist involves being “information literate”, i.e. having the research skills that enable you not just to locate or collect information related to a topic, but to also critically evaluate, process, integrate and apply that information (which may be collected from a range of different sources), to a specific situation or within a specified context. The Lit-RSD tasks that form part of the assessment for Human biology IA are aimed at assisting you to develop and/or refine these essential research skills while studying the structure and function of the human body.

Lit-RSD Task 1 expands upon and extends the RSD diagnostic task introduced in O-week, and focuses on the identification and appropriate acknowledgement of key scientific information about a specified topic and its effective use in constructing a coherent written summary of the topic.

Aims:

Through the completion of Lit-RSD Task 1 each student will have the opportunity to develop and refine the following research skills: -

- Effective note taking, using a framework that identifies key terms, ideas and/or concepts, and organises relevant points and information in relation to these terms in a hierarchical manner.
- Synthesis and integration of key terms and information derived from different sources to form a single set of structured notes that accurately and efficiently conveys the scientific message without duplication of ideas or data.
- Production, from the notes taken, of a logically presented, coherent, piece of writing that conveys the key scientific concepts or findings related to the topic.
- Accurate tracking and documentation, both within the notes and piece of writing, of the origins and/or “ownership” of all key terms, information and ideas derived from the literature provided about the topic (i.e. referencing).

Resources and Requirements for Task:

In order to complete Lit-RSD Task 1, you will need to access the following file, which is available from the Human Biology IA Assignments folder on MyUni: -

- “Bone” Information File – this file contains copies of articles and links to websites from which the notes for the task are to be taken.

You might find the following resources useful in completing the task: -

- Anderson J and Poole M 2001 *Assignment and Thesis Writing 4th Ed.* Wiley Brisbane. Chapter 2 Planning the Assignment, pages 9-17. – The chapter provides general guidelines on taking reliable notes, organising information and planning a piece of writing.
- Marking Criteria for Lit-RSD Task 1 (available in the Human Biology IA Assignments folder) – This document provides an indication of the characteristics that will be assessed.
- Guidelines explaining the Harvard System of reference citation – The Barr Smith Library website links to several useful documents on referencing. We will provide specific guidelines on application of Harvard referencing with Lit-RSD Task 3 later in the semester.

A Research Skills Support Session, run in conjunction with staff from CLPD (Centre for Learning and Professional Development) will be held in the Laboratory Session times scheduled in week 2 of semester (i.e. Wednesday 7th Mar 2-4pm and Thursday 8th Mar 9-11am). The venue is Lab S210a, Medical School South on both days. At the session we will:

1. Provide feedback about the O-week Diagnostic Task.
2. Discuss how to approach the RSD tasks.
3. Explain the marking criteria used for RSD tasks.
4. Introduce some of the tools available for finding scientific information.

Summary of Task:

Students will access the “Bone” Information File, which contains articles and links to information about bone structure and remodeling. From these sources, students will take structured, dot point notes, based around 3 or 4 key scientific concepts or ideas presented in the articles. The notes will then be used to prepare a short, written summary or abstract (not more than 1-1½ A4-sized pages, single spaced) that integrates each of the key concepts and ideas and accurately reports information from the original sources. Throughout the task, the sources of all information will be appropriately tracked, and the final written summary will use the Harvard system of reference citation to acknowledge the origins of data and ideas.

Specific Instructions:

Follow the steps indicated to ensure that each aspect of the competency exercise is undertaken.

STEP ONE

Access the “Bone” Information File.

The file is available in the Assignments Folder of the Human Biology IA MyUni website and contains various information sources about bone structure and remodeling. Read each of the articles or web pages indicated.

STEP TWO

Construct notes from the sources provided.

1. Identify a theme or context around which you will base your notes. Use this to formulate a title for your notes and subsequent summary or abstract (see Step Three).
2. From the sources provided, identify 3 or 4 key terms, ideas and/or concepts and use these as sectional headings for your notes.
3. Under each of your headings, organise the relevant information and data in dot point format, using symbols and abbreviations where appropriate.
4. Indicate the origins of all information, i.e. use a tracking system that links the information with the article or web page from which it was taken. [The designated system of reference citation for Health Sciences courses (with the exception of Psychology) is the Harvard system. Find out information about this system and have a go at using it. The finer details of how to apply Harvard referencing will be presented in the tutorial session in week 5.]

STEP THREE

Write a short summary or abstract that presents the key findings as identified in your notes.

The summary or abstract should incorporate the following features: -

1. A readily identifiable organizational framework or structure that is consistent with the overall context and title of the summary (e.g. introductory sentence, body of discussion of key areas, iterative or concluding sentence).
2. Integration of materials from the various sources in relation to each of the key concepts/ideas documented.
3. Logical linkage of key concepts and their synthesis into a coherent whole.
4. Evidence of understanding (e.g. provision of definitions and explanations) of all scientific data and the context in which they are presented.
5. Documentation of sources, both within the written text, and through the provision of a reference list.

STEP FOUR

Edit/review your work and check that you have addressed all aspects of the task before submitting it for assessment.

1. Check what you have written against both the specific task instructions given in this document, and the Research Skills Assessment Criteria.

2. Check your assignment using an editing checklist. The Centre for Learning and Professional Development Language and Learning Service provides an editing checklist via its website http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/lis/stud_resources/
3. Attach a completed assignment coversheet (available via MyUni) to the front of your Lit-RSD Task 1 and lodge it before the deadline in the locked assignment box in the corridor outside of the School of Medical Sciences Office, level 3, Medical School North. The declaration on the coversheet must be signed. Please retain a copy of your assignment for your records.

