

# Essay plan review

(Please remind me to record if I forget)

17 October 2022

Taking attendance

BF-OB-AU

## Population genetics lab assignment

- ▶ Due: 21 OCT 2022 at 23:59 UK time
- ▶ 25% of total grade
- ▶ Follow the online lab
- ▶ Turn in on Canvas Quizzes
- ▶ Emailed Tables 3 & 4

## Short answer essay plans

- ▶ Received 82 total
- ▶ Feedback on Canvas
- ▶ Anonymous marking
- ▶ Use student number

## General positive feedback

- ▶ Well-structured essay plans
- ▶ Relevant examples
- ▶ Good use of Coyne (2010)
- ▶ Good introductions and conclusions

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## Areas for improvement

1. Linking examples to question
2. Use of broader literature
3. Understanding the question
4. Avoiding unnecessary detail

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- ▶ Examples should link back to the question
- ▶ Why does example support Darwinian evolution?
- ▶ Why does example not support conscious design?

## 1. Linking examples to question

### Main body paragraphs

#### ► Example or evidence 1

- ▶ Introduce and explain example (with references)
- ▶ Explain why supports Darwinian evolution
- ▶ Explain why does not support conscious design

#### ► Example or evidence 2

- ▶ Introduce and explain example (with references)
- ▶ Explain why supports Darwinian evolution
- ▶ Explain why does not support conscious design

## 2. Use of the broader literature

### ► Textbooks, lectures, and websites

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<sup>3</sup>Benesh, D. P., Chubb, J. C., & Parker, G. A. (2022). Adaptive division of growth and development between hosts in helminths with two-host life cycles. *Evolution*, 76(9), 1971-1985.

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- ▶ Textbooks, lectures, and websites
- ▶ Peer-reviewed sources are strongest
  - ▶ Primary source written by researchers
  - ▶ Extensive checks of scientific rigor
  - ▶ Find articles on Google Scholar

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  - ▶ Find articles on [Google Scholar](#)
- ▶ Citing sources in an essay
  - ▶ In text (Coyne 2010; Dyer & Nason 2004; Benesh et al. 2022)
  - ▶ [Google Scholar](#) is again helpful

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#### 4. Avoiding unnecessary detail

What is some of the important evidence for the theory that life on earth has arisen through Darwinian evolution rather than conscious design? ► 400-600 words

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- ▶ Write what you want to say, then shorten

# What is a short answer essay?

An extended written answer to a **specific** question

- ▶ Approximately 500 words
- ▶ Usually 1-3 paragraphs
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The short answer essay format is used in all assignments and the exam (short answer essay journal portfolio)

## Example short answer essay question

“In *Improbable Destinies*, Losos describes convergent evolution and also discusses cases where convergence does not appear to have happened (e.g. Chapter 3). Describe why convergent evolution does not always occur.”

## How to approach short answer essay questions

1. **Read the question** several times to understand what the question is asking
2. **Read and revise relevant literature**, including lectures, text books, **scientific papers**
3. **Summarise your notes** from step 2 and organise them to synthesise what you have learned
4. **Make an essay plan** structuring your answer as a series of ordered bullet points

Questions on short answer essays or population genetics?