

Note that this is the current version of Assignment 1 information and replaces that provided in the Introductory Book in your original external materials package. Note also that there are relatively minor changes to the original, with the most significant to the marking scheme.

Assignment 1: Biodiversity Review

Due date:	26 March 2009
Weighting:	15% of total marks
Format:	Word-processed assignment (.doc file); 12 pt font; 1.5 line spacing; 3 cm left & right margins throughout
Length (approx.):	800-1,200 words (absolute maximum: 1,600 words) excluding tables/figures, references, title page etc
Referencing:	Harvard referencing system preferred; APA system also accepted; however, do not use footnotes.
Submission:	Online (electronic) submission via EASE on Study Desk

Topic:

Five major human activities have been recognised as significantly impacting on global biodiversity through species extinction. Discuss each of these activities, indicating where necessary what problems there are in determining the extent of impacts. In your answer provide suitable definitions of both biodiversity and extinction.

In your assignment you should introduce and briefly discuss biodiversity in general terms (including a suitable definition of biodiversity). A brief definition/overview of extinction should also be provided. You should then provide suitable detail on each of the five major causes of extinction that are contributed to by human activities and any problems we have in trying to assess these. Finally, some concluding remarks should be made, including such things as the extent of the problem, what changes in attitudes/activities are needed etc.

Notes:

1. Your assignment must be word processed and **submitted electronically** via online submission (EASE) in **USQConnect**. Follow the **Writing Guidelines for Assignments** available on the Course Website and use the word (.doc) template provided through EASE.
2. While you may use the internet to help in your search for material, you are only permitted to cite a **maximum of 3 internet sources**. Encyclopaedic sources (such as Wikipedia) are **not** accepted at this level.
3. **Plagiarism** in any form is **not acceptable** and will be dealt with under USQ Regulations.
4. **Copying material** directly (even though you may provide a source for that material) is **not acceptable** and is a form of plagiarism. You must re-write material in your own words. Only occasionally should you use direct quotes.

Marking scheme

Criteria	Weight
General: overall presentation, layout (overall formatting)	5
Structure: arrangement, flow	8
Language: expression, grammar, spelling, etc	10
Content: depth, coverage of topic, etc/integration/understanding)	15
Synthesis & Integration: understanding, integration & synthesis of concepts	15
References: use, citation, formatting, etc	7
Total	60

Guidelines & FAQs

Additional Guidelines

Further to the preceding information, you are required to construct your assignment as a 'mini-essay'. In so doing, you should ensure your assignment has reasonable sentence and paragraph construction and makes sense logically. You should use headings and sub-headings to suitably structure your assignment.

Note the allocation of marks to expression, formatting, use of reference etc. You should provide some suitable references for material in the assignment – at least 4 or 5 key references. Note the limit on internet sources (online referred academic journals are not considered in this definition of internet sources).

FAQs

- *Do we need an 'abstract' or 'summary'?*
No
- *Can I submit a hand-written assignment?*
No.

- *Do we follow the 'Introduction -> Body -> Conclusion' pattern to answer the question?*

It is always good practice to think about the structure of your answer. We at least expect an introductory paragraph, the middle bit (bulk) and a concluding paragraph. The use of headings and subheadings may also help you to structure your answer.

- *Are we required to use a contents page/table listing numbered sub-headings etc, or do we just use un-numbered sub-headings?*

Contents pages & the like are not required for this assignment, although you may still wish to use sub-headings (numbered or un-numbered).

- *Can we include diagrams and figures in the assignment?*

Yes. Indeed, some components are best answered with the inclusion of a diagram. However, you should ensure that you have appropriately acknowledged the source (reference) of any diagram (including those from your study materials).

- *Are Encyclopaedic references (CD-ROM or online) allowed?*

Encyclopaedic-type references (such as *Encarta*, *Wikipedia*, etc) are **not acceptable** at this level (in any University courses) and we would expect that you have moved well-beyond this type of reference.

- *Is the list of references a 'bibliography' in that we can list sources that we used to research the topics but didn't make reference to within the assignment?*

No, only include references that you actually cite in the body of the text.

- *Is there a minimum number of references?*

We would expect at least four or five key references, most students will have more, but 20 references would seem rather excessive.

- *Can I use internet references?*

You are only allowed to cite a maximum of three internet sources, although you may check out many more as part of your researching. Internet sources are a useful and quick starting point, but we would expect the majority of your references to be primary sources (journals etc) or at least secondary sources (text books, reviews etc).

- *I really don't think I will be able to get my assignment in on time, how do I apply for an extension?*

Extensions can only be granted by the course examiner and are given for *bona fide* reasons only. An email request directly to the course examiner (lebrocq@usq.edu.au) is the preferred method for applying for an extension of due date for an assignment

- *Can I apply for an extension on or after the day the assignment is due?*

No. The University policy regarding extensions stipulates that requests for extension must be made prior to the due date.

- *Is there a penalty for late submission?*

Yes. In accordance with University policy, you will be penalised 5% per (working) day your assignment is overdue.