

7.16 Minireview Instructions

Due Date: **Friday, March 18, 2005 at beginning of class.**

A minireview provides a concise, focused review of the literature related to a question of current interest in the scientific community. Often, reading a well-written minireview is the fastest way to get up to speed on a particular topic that is making news. Partly because they are short and usually relatively easy reading, minireviews are often very widely read. Sometimes minireviews also raise questions or suggest new hypotheses or attempt to reconcile conflicting data that has recently been published. Writing a minireview is a good way to organize your thoughts and summarize the knowledge you have obtained about a particular topic that you have acquired from reading the literature and thinking and discussing with others and is a good exercise in scientific writing.

The content and style of your minireview should be similar to those of the minireviews included in your course binders. The Martin 2002 and Di Cristofano and Pandolfi 2000 Cell minireviews are good examples of the minireview style. Your minireview will be somewhat shorter than these, but should follow a similar organization. Choose a topic of interest to you that is related to your Team Project Proposal. For example, “The protein phosphatases of *Drosophila melanogaster* and their potential roles in apoptosis”. You may write your minireview on the same or a different topic from your lab partner. Either way, you are encouraged to discuss the topic of your minireview with others. But you must do the writing on your own of course.

Your minireview should have the following organization:

- **Title.** Creativity in titles is fine for minireviews, as long as the scientific topic is clear from the title - see the Martin 2002, Palaga & Osborne, 2002 and Di Cristofano and Pandolfi 2000 papers for examples of good titles. Shorter is usually better.
- **Author** Your name.
- **Brief Abstract** (Boldface. No more than 2 sentences.) Summarize what the minireview is about as concisely as possible (see Martin 2002 for an example).
- **Introductory paragraph** Provide necessary background/context for the reader. Should indicate or hint at why the chosen topic is important and timely.
- **Body of the minireview** Divide up the minireview into ~3-5 topics/sections, each with its own subheading (in bold). Each subheading should be followed by 1-3 paragraphs. Ideally each paragraph should have a topic sentence and should be written clearly but concisely. The last section often relates to key open questions in the field (e.g., Di Cristofano/Pandolfi’s section titled “Outstanding Questions”).
- **Figure(s), with legend(s)** Incorporate into the text at an appropriate place.

• **References** Cite references in the text using the same formatting guidelines as for the Team Project Proposals, e.g., Smith (2000), Smith & Jones (2001), for papers with one or two authors and Smith et al. (2002) for papers with three or more authors. Provide a reference list at the end, sorted alphabetically by last name of first author. Use the same format as for the Team Project Proposals (remember to list all authors of each paper in the reference list and to italicize the journal name, etc. – see below for details)

Additional guidelines. Submit two hardcopies of your minireview, typed, double-spaced, with pages numbered, using 12 point font and 1” or 1.25” margins. Be sure to include a title and list your name at the top of the first page. The suggested length for the minireview is approximately 4-5 pages (excluding Figure(s) and References), although it may be slightly longer if needed. Include a reference list at the end - approximately 10-15 references suggested. Include one original Figure (may be adapted/based on a figure from a published work or from your Team Project Proposal, but must contain some new content or presentation). Additional display items (figures or tables) may be included if desired. All display items (figures and tables) must have a title (first line of legend, may be a sentence fragment) and a legend explaining the figure (use complete sentences). Look at some legends in published papers for examples of the very concise style that is used in scientific legends. If a figure is adapted from/based on a published figure, a statement such as ‘adapted from Smith (2000)’ or ‘based on data from Smith (2000)’ must appear in the legend.

In writing your minireview, follow the instructions provided by the writing instructor, and consider the following guidelines.

- Choose the topics carefully and organize them in a logical order.
- Cite the literature whenever appropriate.
- Avoid repetition. Use ‘see above’ / ‘see below’ if necessary (but try to avoid).

Reference Formatting

Cite relevant references for statements of known results, hypotheses, methods, or background information. Cite them in the text like this:

“In response to death stimuli, ubiquitination of DIAP1 is enhanced by interaction with Reaper (Martin, 2002; Palaga & Osborne, 2002).”

For references with one author, cite as (Smith, 20XX), where 20XX is the year of publication. For references with two authors, cite as (Smith & Jones, 20XX), and for references with three or more authors, cite as Smith *et al.*, 20XX (Latin for ‘and others’). Include an alphabetical list at the end (ordered by last name of first author), in this format:

Martin, S. J. (2002). Destabilizing influences in apoptosis: sowing the seeds of IAP destruction. *Cell* **109**, 793-796.

Palaga, T. and Osborne, B. (2002). The 3D's of apoptosis: death, degradation and DIAPs. *Nature Cell Biol.* **4**, E149-E151.

Note that the journal name is italicized and the volume number is in bold. In the reference list, include all authors, even if there are more than two. Make sure that all references cited in the text appear in the reference list at the end and vice versa.