



PSY 632 Module Two Short Paper Guidelines and Rubric (Teratogens)

The goal of the short paper assignments is to provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate mastery of course outcomes, apply concepts or techniques, and to construct in-depth positions on each topic. Each short paper in this course challenges you to move from comprehension of key topics and theories to application through critical thinking and/or self-reflection. Each topic will challenge you to utilize your own experiences, or the experiences of an appropriate individual, to provide a context for application. The key is to clearly demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate and form professional positions on the assigned topics.

Prompt: In the resources for Module Two, you reviewed a significant level of biological information for its impacts on development. Exposure to teratogens during sensitive periods of development presents a serious threat to the overall health of the individual. Tobacco products, alcohol, illicit drugs (marijuana, cocaine, heroin, Molly, etc.), and over-the-counter and prescription medications are common in the lives of many individuals. While the health risks would appear to make the use of these substances prohibitive during pregnancy and even after birth, there is a debate that moderate use or use under physician care is reasonably safe.

In this short paper, be sure to address the following critical elements:

- **Risks:** Select one of the teratogens listed above and provide a summary of the risks that the teratogen presents to healthy development. What immediate risks from exposure may be apparent at birth and during the first year? What long-term risk might exposure be linked to for this teratogen? Consider physical, cognitive, social, and emotional domains when considering risks. If the risks are not proven, what supports the link to the chosen substance for that risk?
- **Position:** Construct a position, backed by research, on the use of that substance during pregnancy. Given the current literature, would you consider this substance high- or low-risk during pregnancy and why? Is your position biased in any manner? (It is easy to say never to take anything during pregnancy, but is it supportable with evidence?) If use did not affect the unborn child, would your position change? Why or why not?
- **Changes:** Summarize the changes or evolutions in professional opinions as they relate to your chosen teratogen. (For example, there is research supporting that cocaine use during pregnancy is not the threat it was previously believed to be.) What was the original position of professionals on the use of the teratogen during pregnancy? Has this position changed? How much of the position was due to social and political influences rather than medical or scientific?

Module Two Resources:

[Alexander Tsiaras: Conception to Birth – Visualized](#)

[Pregnancy: A Time for Special Caution](#)

[Concepts of Chemical Dependency \(pp. 233–234\)](#)

[Child Development in the Context of Adversity: Experiential Canalization of Brain and Behavior](#)

Rubric

Guidelines for Submission: Your paper must be submitted as a two- to three-page Microsoft Word document with double spacing, 12-point Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, and at least three sources cited in APA format.

| Critical Elements | Exemplary (100%) | Proficient (90%) | Needs Improvement (70%) | Not Evident (0%) | Value |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|-------------|
| Risks | Meets “Proficient” criteria and the summary is substantiated with specific and relevant details | Provides a detailed summary of the risks that the selected teratogen presents to healthy development | Provides a summary of the risks that the selected teratogen presents to healthy development, but summary lacks details | Does not provide a summary of the risks that the selected teratogen presents to healthy development | 30 |
| Position | Meets “Proficient” criteria and position includes specific and relevant details supported by research | Constructs a position on the use of the selected teratogen during pregnancy supported by scholarly evidence | Constructs a position on the use of the selected teratogen during pregnancy, but position lacks evidence | Does not construct a position on the use of the selected teratogen during pregnancy | 30 |
| Changes | Meets “Proficient” criteria and the summary is substantiated with specific and relevant details | Provides a detailed summary of changes or evolutions in professional opinions as they relate to the selected teratogen | Provides a summary of changes or evolutions in professional opinions as they relate to the selected teratogen, but summary lacks details | Does not provide a summary of changes or evolutions in professional opinions as they relate to the selected teratogen | 30 |
| Articulation of Response | Submission is free of errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, and organization and is presented in a professional and easy-to-read format | Submission has no major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization | Submission has major errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that negatively impact readability and articulation of main ideas | Submission has critical errors related to citations, grammar, spelling, syntax, or organization that prevent understanding of ideas | 10 |
| Earned Total | | | | | 100% |