# Task Description

**Aligned subject learning outcomes**

- Apply strategies for reading, writing and analysing academic texts
- Describe current approaches in the fields of language, literacy and first and second language learning

| Aligned professional standards/competencies | Standard 1: Know students and how they learn  
1.2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.  
Standard 2: Know the content and how to teach it  
2.5 Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.  
| Standard 3: Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning  
3.3 Include a range of teaching strategies.  
Outcome 5: Children are Effective Communicators  
Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes  
Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts  
Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media  
Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work  
Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group or individual</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weighting</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**Format**

Word Processed – Arial font, size 12, double-spaced.

You are required to include a title page that details your full name, your student number and the word length of the essay (excluding end of text referencing – i.e. the reference list)

**Due date**

Due by 4pm – Wednesday 26th April (Week 9)
Task Description

This task requires you to write an essay in response to the following topic.

Outline the development of language skills, across the birth to late adolescent lifespan, with reference to at least two theoretical perspectives. Describe factors impacting on the development of language in home and school environments. How does language development facilitate or inhibit language and literacy learning throughout the school years?

To meet the demands of this task (as per the assessment criteria), this essay should be approximately 1500 (maximum) words in length (+ or –10%). The word limit does not include the reference list.
Unpacking the Essay Question

In writing this essay, you are required to:
1. demonstrate evidence of reading within the related field;
2. demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the topic;
3. demonstrate the capacity to communicate your ideas clearly, logically and accurately in writing;
4. demonstrate your capacity to write for an academic audience – and thus display academic literacy skills;
5. demonstrate your use of the requirements of the – that is, consist of an introduction, body and conclusion – with clear and well-constructed paragraphs (topic sentence, body and concluding sentences) and cohesive links between paragraphs evident throughout the essay; and
6. demonstrate accurate use of the American Psychological Association (APA) reference style in quotations, in-text and end-of-text referencing.
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6. demonstrate accurate use of the American Psychological Association (APA) reference style in quotations, in-text and end-of-text referencing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of the lifespan development of language with reference to at least two theoretical perspectives (10 marks)</td>
<td>Discerning Selection of accurate, relevant and insightful content. Discussed in a very articulate and highly detailed way.</td>
<td>Very good selection of accurate, relevant content. Discussed in an articulate and well-detailed manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of factors impacting on home and school language development. (10 marks)</td>
<td>Articulate, highly detailed and synthesized discussion of complex and relevant factors.</td>
<td>Articulate, well-detailed and synthesized discussion of complex and relevant factors.</td>
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<td>Criterion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay and writing skills (10 marks)</td>
<td>Sustained and always accurate use of generic essay features.</td>
<td>Sustained and accurate use of generic essay features with few minor slippages. Use of conventional spelling, punctuation and grammatical conventions with few minor errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criterion</td>
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<td>Use of Academic Readings (5 Marks)</td>
<td>Extensive, relevant academic literature, including independently sourced readings, cited and synthesized to support the discussion.</td>
<td>A range of relevant academic literature cited which is well described and organised to support the discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referencing - (APA) (5 Marks)</td>
<td>Sustained, and accurate use of APA referencing: - in-text - reference list</td>
<td>Sustained and accurate use of APA referencing with only infrequent minor errors: - in-text - reference list</td>
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The essay title succinctly outlines the focus of the entire essay with these keywords:

Effects - Language Development
Birth - Adolescence
Introduction

1 The development of language is a complex process which, though often thought to be innate, is also heavily dependent on environmental influences. A child’s home environment can have a large impact on her language development. Schools generally rely on social interaction to teach language. Where a child’s home environment is different from that of the school, she is more likely to encounter problems with language development.
The opening sentence clearly introduces the topic (Development of Language) in a general way and orientates the reader to the subject with background information pertaining to factors (home and school environments) impacting on language development.
Child development is a large subject area and the writer has clearly articulated the limits the scope of what will be discussed (home and school environments).

The thesis statement clearly identifies the writer’s position (problems arise when a child’s home environment is different from that of the school). The thesis statement indicates the argument or contention when you are asked to draw conclusions about a subject.
Body Paragraph One

The language development of children begins in utero, where they are conditioned to the phonemes (the smallest units of sounds) of their parent’s native language (Moon, Lagercrantz, & Kuhl, 2013). At birth, children can already distinguish between their mother tongue and other languages (Ramus, Hauser, Miller, Morris, & Mehler, 2000). When they reach the age of around six months, infants begin to babble (Burton, Westen, & Kowalski, 2015). This stage occurs in infants across cultures at roughly the same age, and even includes deaf infants (Emmitt, Zbaracki, Komesaroff, & Pollock, 2015), which indicates that babbling does not depend on speech input. Instead, babbling seems to be innate (Burton et al., 2015).
The first body paragraph provides background information around the stages of language development supported by scholarly and evidenced-based research from the discipline.

The topic sentence states the topic and central idea of the paragraph. Supporting sentences expand, explain, examine and justify the points made in the topic sentence with synthesised evidence from scholarly sources.
In-text citations inform the reader that you used someone else's ideas or words.
Every in-text citation needs an entry in the essay's reference list.

APA is an author date system, which means this information comes first in both reference & In-text citations. Note how all the authors are provided for the Burton paper the 1st time, but Burton et al. is provided the 2nd time. Great use of APA rules!!
Chomsky (1978) also introduced the idea of universal grammar (UG). He argues that the learning of grammar cannot be acquired through language input alone, as children are able to construct grammatical sentences that they have never heard before. For example, children often apply a grammatical rule to construct the (incorrect) term "hisself" (Brown, as cited in Burton et al., 2015, p. 319). Senghas (as cited in Burton et al., 2015) found that children at schools for the deaf in Nicaragua constructed their own sign language, introducing a grammar very similar to the American Sign Language (ASL), even though they had no prior knowledge of ASL.
Hence, supporting the idea of UG. As Unsworth (2009) put it, "the variation in natural language is captured in a predetermined set of options from which children make a selection on the basis of linguistic input to which they are exposed" (p.23). UG acts like a scaffold into which children assimilate information given by their environment. By 12 months of age, children begin to utter their first words, mainly using concrete nouns in one-word utterances, or holophrases (Emmitt et al., 2015). They then transition into two-word utterances at around 2 years of age (Burton et al., 2015) and by age four are able to speak in fully grammatical sentences (Brown, & Fraser, 1963).
This is a well-structured paragraph.
The topic sentence is followed by a range of strong supporting sentences that include further explanations, examples, and evidence.

A concluding sentence would strengthen this paragraph.
Relate the example and evidence back to your thesis and link to the focus of the next body paragraph.
Great citing of secondary sources (see Brown and Senghas in-text citations).
Page numbers are included when citing a direct quote.

There are two options for writing in-text citations:
Unsworth (2009) put it...
Included within paragraph text
(Brown, & Fraser, 1963)
Added at the end of the idea
Evidence from the text around factors impacting home development (synthesized discussion):

Evidence does seem to support Vygotsky’s (as cited in Nagel, & Scholes, 2016) assertion that language is developed mainly through social interaction. The most important influence on development comes from interaction with parents or caregivers in the home (Burton et al., 2015). Where parents act as ‘conversationalists’ for their children, expanding on or correcting their utterances, children’s language develops more quickly (Emmitt et al., 2015, p. 254; Hoff-Ginsberg, as cited in Burton et al., 2015). It is interesting to compare this with Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD) (as cited in McInerney, 2014). This is ‘the distance between the actual development level of a child…and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers’ (McInerney, 2014, p.57).
Evidence from the text of discerning selection of accurate, relevant and insightful content

An alternative view of language development has been put forward by Vygotsky (as cited in Nagel, & Scholes, 2016). As opposed to Chomsky, Vygotsky saw language as primarily influenced by the environment (Reunamo, & Nurmilaakso, 2007).
Evidence from the text of extensive, relevant literature cited and synthesized to support discussion:

The dominant discourse at schools generally reflects middle-class values (Morrison & McIntyre, 1971; Hayes, 2013). This means that children from non-middle class backgrounds are less likely to fit into the Discourse of the school environment. Instead, they will have to learn a new Discourse before they are able to effectively engage in language learning at school (Hayes, 2013).
Conclusion

Language learning is a complex process which begins in utero and continues into early adolescence. While Chomsky has argued that language learning is innate, the home and school environments to which a child is exposed can have influence on her language development. Children whose home Discourse is similar to the Discourse of the school have an advantage over children from other backgrounds.
The conclusion relates the essay back to the essay question, reiterates the thesis point and summarises the most important evidence supporting the position taken.

The conclusion matches the introduction in terms of the ideas presented and the argument put forward.

**Draw Conclusions**

- What is the significance of your findings?
- What are the implications of your conclusions for this topic and for the broader field?
- Are there any limitations to your approach?
- Are there any other factors of relevance that impact upon the topic but fell outside the scope of the essay?
- Are there any suggestions you can make in terms of future research?
References list excerpt


Make sure your reference list is strong. Your marker may check it out to get a **first impression** of your assignment before he/she starts reading the text. You don't want your marker to see sloppy formatting or poor information sources.

**Standardised references** (e.g. APA style) allows readers to easily locate your information sources. This means the use of italics and order of information is important.
This reference list is perfect! The writer has paid attention to required APA referencing rules for the different information sources.

**Top APA Tips**

- Use alphabetical order for reference lists
- Indent the 2nd and subsequent lines of references
- Show the *edition* number of books that are 2nd edition or above
- The *location* within USA is the state - outside of USA it is the country
- *Capitals* are only given to proper nouns, the first letter of a title, and the first letter after a colon
- Do *italicise*: Book titles; journal titles and volume numbers. Don't italicise: Chapter titles; journal article titles.