

Lab Essay Assignment: DNA Technology & Forensics

The topics for this week's Lab Essay Assignment are detailed below. You may take your pick of any of these topics. Your essay will be worth up to 5 points, and will be submitted to your TA's the next time you meet for lab. In order to receive full credit, you MUST follow ALL of the basic essay guidelines as described on the BIO 102 course web site. These guidelines are very simple and straightforward, however failure to follow them will result in a loss of points and potentially even a zero on the assignment. A full list of essay guidelines, as well as a sample essay and other helpful links, can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.eeb.uconn.edu/courses/bio102/Essayguidelines.htm>

TOPIC:

Your essay topic for this week is the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS). Since its creation, CODIS has been regarded as a very valuable yet controversial program. In a few paragraphs, describe its history and function. Be sure your essay addresses the following points:

- What type of data does it contain?
- Generally speaking, how does it work?
- What agencies utilize it?
- Approximately how many profiles are currently in the system?
- Are there any specific limitations or downfalls to this system?
- It has also been suggested that CODIS should contain DNA data from all American citizens (not just criminals), and possibly even illegal immigrant detainees. Based on what you have researched as well as your own personal views, provide your opinion* on this prospect in the final paragraph.

*Please note: this essay is not intended to be a "pure opinion piece" even though you are asked to state your opinion at the end. Therefore, you are still required to provide references for the bulk of your paper. The point here is that opinions can only be taken seriously when they are both well-informed and justified.