

Writing an Analysis of an Argument

WRITING ASSIGNMENT:

Your essay assignment involves a close, deliberate reading, an annotation, then an analysis of the *claim, support, and warrant* of **one** of the texts below that we have discussed in class:

1. "The Declaration of Independence"

2. "A Modest Proposal"

3. "From *Crito*"

Use your class notes and textbook annotations as guides for what to identify and point out in your own essay. Your goal is to set forth a clear, *objective analysis* of how the text is *constructed* or assembled rather than a touchy-feely, warm & cozy response or reaction to it. In your analysis of the target text, you will be evaluated on how well you identify and explain the function of the three elements of argument: claim, support, and warrants.

Title:

Construct an intriguing, interest-arousing title that *conveys the subject of your essay*. Think of your title as a kind of headline. You should incorporate the word "analysis," or a synonym of it, somewhere into your title. Titles with subtitles will work well, too, such as: To Escape or Not to Escape: Analysis of *Crito*.

Introductory Paragraph and Thesis Statement:

Identify your target text (writer and essay title). Describe the author's purpose; give a quick summary/overview of material and subject matter of the piece. End your introductory paragraph by stating your own thesis. (*Hint: your own thesis needs to assert the need to analyze or the value of analyzing the target text you have chosen. Your own thesis actually is a claim of value. Don't confuse this with the claim asserted in the target text.*)

Main Body Paragraphs:

- Your initial main body paragraph should identify the type of a **claim** the target text makes, why, and what evidence supports your view. *Warning: Do not evaluate the worth of the claim or discuss your opinions.*
- Also, use an appropriate number of paragraphs (2-4) to explain what *kind(s)/types* of **support** the author employs. Be sure to use *multiple* clear examples from the target text.
- Additionally, use at least one paragraph to discuss the **warrant(s)** you think the writer is using and identify whether they are *directly* stated or *implied* and why. (Be careful not to digress into tangents that pursue your own persuasive ends.) Use brief quotations; padding your essay with long quotations will not be an efficient use of space in this essay.

Conclusion Paragraph:

In the conclusion, go beyond merely regurgitating you points just covered in your essay because summaries make very weak endings. Experiment with different ways to conclude your essay that will make us think. You may want to echo your thesis (your own value claim), and comment on the worth of or value of the in-depth study of your chosen target text, *but don't offer your opinion on the issue the target text raises.*

REQUIREMENTS

- **Page length:** Your essay must be *exactly 3 typed, double-spaced pages* (approximately 900-100 words). (This assignment is partly an exercise in carefully selecting what you want to talk about in your essay. Many of you could easily write 7-10 pages analyzing these works.)
- **Writing mode:** Analytical/expository. (You are picking apart, breaking down, and explaining the essay.)
- **Audience:** Adults/college students. (Assume your readers are critical readers/thinkers like yourself.)
- **Purpose:** To analyze and to explain how the target essay is assembled.
- **SAE:** Remember, your paper must follow, *and will be evaluated on*, the basic conventions of Standard American written English (correct mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and so forth).
- **Reminder:** This essay must be written in the third person, so use of "you" or "I" **will lower your grade.**

*Be sure to use the **present tense** whenever you discuss what the author says in the essay you are analyzing.*

Also make sure you introduce the author and title of the text you are analyzing.

- **MLA and Using a Primary Text Source:** This paper requires that you cite from your chosen target text above. Consequently you must use the MLA in-text parenthetical citation method and add a Work Cited page (*note the singular form*) at the end of your essay. Use citations and parenthetical notes when appropriate and avoid merely writing plot summaries of the target text. All outside sources are forbidden *and will cause you to earn a grade of zero (0) on the essay assignment.*

**PEER CRITIQUE
ROUGH DRAFT DUE** _____

FINAL DRAFT DUE _____