

ACADEMIC WRITING FOR ENGLISH 101-97



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Academic Writing for English 101-97 by Holly Morrison
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This text was compiled on 04/25/2026

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1.1: Rhetorical Analysis--Readings

15.1.1 What's rhetorical analysis?

The act of conducting a rhetorical analysis on a text is fairly different from the work you've done with other texts as you compose other academic essays. Rhetorical analysis is analyzing the rhetorical moves made in a text and deciding if they are effective in persuading their intended audience. When we rhetorically analyze a text, we are not primarily concerned with what is stated, but rather *how* it is stated. This differs from what we do most of the time in college writing. In college writing, we typically write about the topics, themes, arguments, and evidence in a text—we don't concern ourselves with how the information is presented. We provide quotes or paraphrases from the text because we believe they do a "good" or "bad" job of arguing the point, and therefore they directly or indirectly support our argument. In rhetorical analysis, we seek to determine if and how a text is rhetorically effective. Something that is rhetorically effective simply achieves its purpose—rhetorical analysis does not make a claim about whether or not the argument of the text is right or wrong.



Consider the following examples that illustrate how a rhetorical analysis of a text differs from our "regular" academic use of a text:

Source Text

"The Goose Diet Trend: To Honk or Not To Honk" *The Fake Magazine*, July 2023, by Dr. Michael Gosling

The Goose Diet, commonly known as "honking" on social media, is a growing trend in which teens and adults eat nothing but grass clippings in an effort to lose weight and, reportedly get "goose juiced"—meaning they take on the fearless aggression of a nesting Canadian goose. However, from my 10 1-month studies on the impact of grass clippings on adult human diets, and as a biologist, dietician, and medical doctor, I can definitively say that grass clippings are not a viable alternative to the standard adult diet and in fact present serious health hazards if consumed exclusively. In the study, American adults aged 24-50 ate up to 10lbs of grass clippings per day, until satiated. They ate nothing else but were free to drink as much water as desired. Overall, 90% of participants lost 20% of their body weight or more and were severely malnourished. 71% of that 80% had B vitamin and amino acid deficiencies that caused severe symptoms (psychosis, agitation, malaise, explosions) and acute disease. Further, all participants (100%) complained of extreme anxiety and depression resulting from the horror of eating grass clippings for every single meal and snack. 90% of participants reported spells of uncontrollable crying at each mealtime. I implore the public to not eat grass clippings exclusively or primarily—your health is at risk if you do. At most, grass clippings should be an occasional snack accompanied by your preferred proteins and fruits.

How you would typically interact with the source in an academic writing assignment:

- Ex 1: Despite the claims made by the TikTok influencers noted above, eating only grass clippings is actually quite dangerous to your health: "Overall, 90% of participants lost 20% of their body weight or more and were severely malnourished. 71% of that 80% had B vitamin and amino acid deficiencies that caused severe symptoms and acute disease" (Gosling). Clearly, this trend is not only not worth it, it's creating a health problem.
- Ex 2: While perhaps only being safe and tolerable for a small minority of people, the Goose Diet really does work: In a set of studies conducted by famed Dr. Micheal Gosling, "90% of participants lost 20% of their body weight" in a single month. This is substantially more weight loss than conventional means, or even other restrictive diets.

What we do in a rhetorical analysis:

Dr. Gosling effectively argues his point mostly by using logos. He uses the results of his studies to convince the reader that the Goose Diet is in fact dangerous. He

states, "Overall, 90% of participants lost 20% of their body weight or more and were severely malnourished. 71% of that 80% had B vitamin and amino acid deficiencies that caused severe symptoms (psychosis, agitation, malaise, explosions) and acute disease." From these metrics, the reasonable reader would likely conclude that the benefits of the diet do not outweigh the detrimental aspects of it. The author's scant use of ethos does also help—since the reader understands him to be an expert in diet and human health, they are inclined to believe him, and they don't need much more than that. Gosling also peppers in pathos, using words like "extreme" and "horror" to subtly emphasize his reading of the results and further convince the reader of his argument.

Notice that rhetorical analysis isn't about whether or not the author's argument is true or even valid—it's about **how the author made the argument to their intended audience**.

In rhetorical analysis, we are very concerned with how the argument is presented by the author/creator to their audience. To properly rhetorically analyze a text, we first need to understand the Rhetorical Situation, as discussed in the previous chapter. Let's review a few items.

Review: What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is persuasive communication, or the art of persuasive speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating through a text. The persuasion that rhetoric refers to is usually understood as intentional, e.g. the creator of a text must have the intention to persuade in order for it to be rhetorically analyzed. However, many rhetoricians (people who study rhetoric and/or carefully craft their own text based on the rules of rhetoric) argue that every communication is rhetoric because we are always trying to persuade someone of something.

The term "rhetoric" is often pejoratively used to refer to language or texts that are clever or cunning, but lacking substance, or in reference to a text that is artfully done but with scarce, poor-quality, or false content. For instance, someone might say "all his rhetoric is a waste of time" regarding a politician's floral descriptions and promises he couldn't possibly fulfill in his role. In this way, rhetoric is sometimes used to indicate trickery or deception. These are colloquial understandings of rhetoric: the studying and employing of rhetorical principles from the Aristotelian method that we're using, is actually a pursuit of truth. By considering the audience's characteristics, experiences, needs, and desires and then tailoring the messaging of the content to that, rhetoric seeks to convey the content—the truthful content—in ways that the audience is able and/or willing to consume. Rhetoric is misused when, in considering the audience, it seeks to manipulate the truth or the will of the audience.

In short, rhetoric refers to *how* something is said, written, or otherwise conveyed, rather than *what* is said.

What's a text?

Anything that can be "read," i.e., consumed and interpreted. A book, an article, a YouTube video, a TikTok, a presidential campaign poster, and a syllabus are all examples of texts.

The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet

Name of Text	Once we understand the rhetorical situation, we can then move on to understanding the rhetorical appeals/modes of persuasion: logos, pathos, and ethos.				
Author(s)/creator(s)					
Year of publication and publisher/publication	Mode of persuasion	What it is	How it works	Benefits of using it	Drawbacks using it
Topic(s)	Ethos	Ethical appeal based on reputation	Persuading your audience by convincing them that you are credible, reliable, and authoritative on the matter at hand. The other appeals are somewhat or entirely dependent on this one.	Prove that you are credible enough to discuss and argue on your topic	Ethos may have an added effect, i.e. reputation of author/speaker may make audience likely to believe them.
Main argument/ thesis statement					
Describe relevant elements of the author's identity, experience/education, and reputation.					
Context of the text (what relevant events were happening in the locality and world when the text was created?)	Pathos	Emotional appeal	Persuading your audience by appealing to their emotions, i.e. making them feel something (fear, empathy, pity, etc.)	People, in general, are persuaded by their feelings	If used too much for audience, it can undermine credibility.
Who's the intended audience? What do you know about them?					
Who's the audience? How do they differ from the intended audience?	Logos	Logical appeal	Persuading your audience by using logic and reason. This is often accomplished by using facts and statistics.	People are also fairly logically and see statistics as reliable	Excessive pathos/ethos can decrease the importance or urgency of your argument.
What is the author's purpose? What do they hope to accomplish in creating the text?					

15.1.2 Logos, Pathos, and Ethos

Ethos refers to the author's ethical appeal based on the reliability and character of the author. Authors use ethos by stating their degrees, education/training, experience, honors, and career positions, and by correctly and accurately citing other well-respected sources.

Pathos refers to the author's emotional appeal. When authors use pathos, they attempt to evoke emotion in their audience, with the intent to persuade them. Pathos appeals are very common in general conversation, advertising, and virtually any time a request is made.

Logos refers to the author's use of logic in the text. This is an employment of their own logic and rationality, and it is their encouragement of the readers' logic. Citing and presenting statistics and other numerical data, and data in general, are all examples of logos use.

Note that simply attempting to use any of these modes does not equal success. It's possible and likely to use these modes and fail at persuading the audience. The success of any mode is dictated by whether or not the audience is persuaded.

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1.2: Rhetorical Analysis--Classroom Activity

15.2 Activity

At this point, you should have already thoroughly read “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” In groups, complete the following worksheet, Rhetorical Analysis Worksheet. Then, for homework, continue locating and logging specific uses of logos, ethos, and pathos using the

Rhetorical Analysis Worksheet

Complete the worksheet based on “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. Author's purpose			
2. Author's intended audience			
3. Do you think the author achieves their purpose? (are they rhetorically effective?)			
3a. To what extent?			
4. Are all 3 modes of persuasion employed?			
5. If so, is there a dominant rhetorical mode? (what?)			
6a-c. Copy/paste 2-3 quotations (in the case of ethos, perhaps some paraphrases as well) from the article that demonstrate each mode of persuasion			
6a. Logos			
6b. Pathos			
6c. Ethos			

Rhetorical Appeals Log

Author:

Text title:

Direct quote from text (copy and paste from the original text)	Type of Rhetorical Appeal: logos, pathos, and/or ethos? (can be a combination)	Do you think this quote is effective in persuading the author's intended audience? Explain.

Rhetorical Appeals Log [Example]

Author: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr

Text title: “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

Direct quote from text (copy and paste from the original text)	Type of Rhetorical Appeal: logos, pathos, and/or ethos? (can be a combination)	Do you think this quote is effective in persuading the author's intended audience? Explain.
“I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia...Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.”	Ethos, logos	Yes. It shows that the author is a leader, and Birmingham was asked of a “troubled” Christian leader, how he ended the situation.
“Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities”	pathos	By comparing the current situation to “dark clouds” and “fog,” the reader is made to feel the wrongness of the situation and the need for change.
“I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church, who was nurtured in its bosom”	Ethos, pathos	Yes, probably. The author is a minister of the gospel, and the reader is likely to agree with him and use the same logic to defend his actions.
“On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: “What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where do they put their God? Where do they put the lips of Governor Barnett, dipped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred?”	Pathos, logos	Yes, maybe? The author is using rhetorical questions to appeal to the reader's sense of justice and morality.

Analyzing MLK’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Context

Composed in early April 1963 during the civil rights movement, King began writing it on the margins of a newspaper while incarcerated.

While we mostly think of King as a civil rights activist, he was also a clergyman, like the members of his stated, intended audience. This means he was a Christian religious leader and that he went to seminary—a specialized postsecondary institution that focuses on instructing students in theology (the study of God) and religious traditions and texts while training them to become religious leaders. King also received a PhD in theology. In short, MLK was also a trained, very well-educated Christian pastor.

MLK was already president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which was, and still is, an important Black civil rights organization.

SCLC’s campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, resulted in King’s arrest and imprisonment. King was arrested for violating a recent ruling stating that no one was allowed to demonstrate or picket. King was aware of this rule and he chose to disobey it for the reasons he outlines in his letter.

While in jail, King read “A Call for Unity” in a newspaper—the article was written by eight local white clergymen who disagreed with King’s tactics. While the article did not specifically mention King, it was clear to King that it was about him and his methods of

seeking justice. King did not have any paper in his jail cell, so he wrote his response on the margins of the newspaper, until his lawyer was able to get him a notepad.

Without the consent of Dr. King, the excerpts from the letter were published on May 19, 1963, in the *New York Post Sunday Magazine*. The letter was first consensually and completely published as "Letter from Birmingham City Jail" a month later by the *American Friends Service Committee* in May 1963. It was then published multiple times over the next three months: in the June 1963 issue of *Liberation*, the June 12, 1963, edition of *The Christian Century*, the June 24, 1963, edition of *The New Leader*, the July 1963 edition of *The Progressive* under the headline "Tears of Love," and in the August 1963 edition of *The Atlantic Monthly* under the headline "The Negro Is Your Brother."

Audio

Audio recording of MLK reading the text (55 minutes) : <https://okra.stanford.edu/media/audio/630416001.mp3>

Text

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants-

-for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast

majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience. You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal. Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of

Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber. I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of

oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist. But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some -such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle--have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some

notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful--in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the

twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment. I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use

moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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1.3: Rhetorical Analysis--Assignment

15.3 Assignment: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

15.3.1 Assignment Description

- **1,000 words minimum** (around 3-4 pages), 1,250 word maximum. Word count DOES NOT include your heading and title
- Must be in MLA format
- Must have a Works Cited page

Purpose: Examine the rhetorical modes of persuasion (logos, pathos, and ethos) employed by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" to **argue** whether, and to what extent, he is effective in arguing his own points.

Audience: Your fellow Engl-101-097 classmates

Source text: "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

No outside sources are required for this paper. Depending on your thesis, you may find it helpful to reference details about the author(s)—if you do so, and those details are not common knowledge, those sources must be cited.

This is NOT a research essay. Your goal is to identify and assess the modes of persuasion used by the author; not the actual validity of their arguments. This essay should not argue points on MLK, The Civil Rights movement, or protesting. Remember that rhetorical effectiveness does not necessarily equal truth or validity. **Something that is rhetorically effective simply achieves its purpose.**

To do this assignment, you will need to carefully read—do the 3 reads, and annotate—"Letter from a Birmingham Jail." If you had difficulty understanding the article, I recommend you see a Reading tutor at Truman' WRC before you begin writing. I also recommend everyone schedule an appointment with a writing tutor at least once for each major writing assignment.

Structure requirements

Your introduction must include an attention-getting hook, some context on the letter, a short summary of the letter including MLK's thesis, a bridge to your thesis, and your thesis statement.

The body of your essay must argue your thesis. Everything in the body of your essay should support your thesis. If it doesn't, it shouldn't be there. You'll prove your argument viable by providing explanation of the rhetorical modes of persuasion used, showing (by quotes and paraphrases) where the authors attempt to employ these devices, and then explaining how and why these attempts are successful or not.

Your conclusion is a single paragraph that restates your main points and your thesis. It must not present any new information. It should end with a provocative or summative thought.

15.3.2 Thesis example

In "A Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. does not effectively argue his major points because he relies too heavily on pathos, his employment of logos is incorrect, and his use of ethos would not have connected to his audience.

Now, let's break it down:

In "A Letter from Birmingham Jail,"

[1. Martin Luther King Jr. does not effectively argue his major points] CONCLUSION

because

[2. he relies too heavily on pathos,] PREMISE

while

[3. his employment of logos is incorrect], PREMISE

and

[4. his use of ethos would not have connected to his audience]. PREMISE

· Part 1 states if you think MLK was effective in his use of rhetoric, or the conclusion of your argument.

o Options:

§ he was effective

§ he was not effective

§ he was somewhat effective/ he was somewhat ineffective

· Part 2 provides a premise for your conclusion: it describes your perspective on how he used pathos, and how that relates to the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of his argument for his audience.

· Part 3 provides a premise for your conclusion: it describes your perspective on how he used logos, and how that relates to the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of his argument for his audience.

· Part 4 provides a premise for your conclusion: it describes your perspective on how he used ethos, and how that relates to the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of his argument for his audience.

Try it for yourself:

In "A Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. _____

_____, because _____,
_____, and _____.

Keep in mind, this is a suggested template. You can organize your thesis in any way you see fit, as long as it states whether or not MLK's argument was effective, and addresses his use of logos, pathos, and ethos.

15.3.3 Suggestions on How to Organize Your Rhetorical Analysis

There are many ways to organize your rhetorical analysis, but here are two possible ways:

By Argument

MLK refutes many points that his opponents, real or intelligently imagined, make. Before refuting them,

however, he states their specific argument. Consider the following quotes:

"One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely." (real opposition)

"You may well ask: 'Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better

path?'" (an imagined opponent/opposition—this is called planting a naysayer—more on this later!)

In either case, MLK reports what "they say," and he then refutes his opponent's claims using logos, pathos, and ethos (his "I say"). He does this many times throughout the essay.

So, you can organize your essay based on these arguments. Begin by locating those "they say/I say"

arguments, then select the most important arguments, and finally identify the modes of persuasion (the logos,

pathos, and ethos) he uses to effectively/ineffectively argue.

Each paragraph would look something like this, but **each paragraph** will cover a different argument:

I. Topic sentence: *King states that X says Y, and he then then expertly refutes X's claims primarily using pathos, though he*

also relies on logos.

A. Transition

B. Example of "expert" use of pathos from text

C. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument

D. More explanation

E. Another example of pathos

F. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument

G. More explanation

H. Transition

I. Example of use of logos from text

J. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument

K. More explanation

L. Another example of logos

M. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument

N. Conclusion

By Logos/Pathos/Ethos.

You can also organize your paper by separately covering logos, pathos, and ethos.

In this model, you would have **one paragraph about logos, one on pathos, and another on ethos.**

This seems easy, right? Well, this model does not allow for the complexity of the text. MLK is often uses pathos and logos in the same phrase, or ethos, logos, and pathos in a single sentence.

Remember, in rhetoric, there are few "pure" pathos or ethos statements, and even logos will usually work in tandem with pathos or ethos. If you choose to use this model, then you will still have to talk about more than one element of rhetoric in any given paragraph.

In order to properly deal with the complexity of the text, you can choose to have paragraphs that primarily deal with a single mode of persuasion, but that also deal with other modes.

For example:

I. Topic sentence: *King's use of ethos is the foundation of his argument.*

- A. Transition
- B. Example of foundational use of ethos from text
- C. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument
- D. More explanation
- E. Another example of ethos
- F. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument
- G. More explanation
- H. Transition
- I. Another example of ethos
- J. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument
- K. Acknowledgement that his quote also contains pathos.
- L. Explanation of how this combination of ethos and pathos work well together
- M. Example of use of ethos from text
- N. Explanation as to why this strengthens his argument
- O. Conclusion

From this outline we can see that this paragraph would be mostly about ethos, but it would also acknowledge when other modes of persuasion are present in the given examples.

Other outline examples

You do not have to use either outline for your essay—these are just possibilities to spark your own outline creation. You may, however, use them in part or exactly.

Example brief outline 1

1. Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)
 - a. Hook
 - b. Topic introduction
 - c. Article Summary
 - d. Bridge to thesis
 - e. Argumentative thesis statement
2. Author's use of ethos (1 paragraphs)
3. use of logos (1-paragraph)
4. use of pathos (1 paragraph)
5. Conclusion (1 paragraph)
 - a. Restate thesis
 - b. Summarize main points
 - c. Summary sentence

Example brief outline 2

1. Introduction (1-2 paragraphs)
 - a. Hook
 - b. Topic introduction
 - c. Article Summary
 - d. Bridge to thesis
 - e. Argumentative thesis statement
2. Discuss MLK's use of logos, pathos, ethos and its effectiveness for his intended audience (2 paragraphs)
3. Discuss MLK's use of logos, pathos, ethos and its effectiveness for his audience (2 paragraphs)
4. Conclusion (1 paragraph)
 - a. Restate thesis
 - b. Summarize main points
 - c. Summary sentence

However you decide to organize your analysis, keep in mind that your argument should flow, and most importantly, it should answer the prompt completely and in detail.

15.3.4 Rubric

Rhetorical Analysis Essay Rubric Engl-101/097 Prof. Nowacki

150 points possible Your score: / 150 Letter Grade:

Essay Element/Criteria	Excellent	Good
INTRODUCTION/CONCLUSION (25-0) --introductory paragraph(s) contain(s) ALL of the following: attention-getting hook, a brief overview of the issue the article discusses and why it's relevant, a short summary of the article including it is arguing (their thesis), a bridge to your thesis, and your thesis statement --conclusion is a single paragraph that restates your main points and your thesis. It must not present any new information. It should end with a provocative or summative thought.	25-22.5	22-
THESIS (15-0) The thesis statement examines the rhetorical modes of persuasion (logos, pathos, and ethos) employed by both authors to argue whether, and to what extent, they are effective in arguing their own points.	15-14	13-
UNDERSTANDING THE RHETORICAL SITUATION AND MODES OF PERSUASION (40-0) --demonstrates understanding of logos, pathos, and ethos and correctly identifies each in the authors' texts --the rhetorical situation of the texts are addressed and incorporated into the analysis	40-36	35-31
STRENGTH OF THE ARGUMENT (30-0) --includes a focused, clear thesis statement that states a position, gives reasoning, and has an appropriate scope and relevant information for readers --develops a persuasive argument --uses topic sentences to support the thesis with clear assertions, explanations, and well-reasoned arguments --uses thorough and accurate evidence from the two source texts to support the thesis and develop the argument --uses critical thinking to interpret and explain evidence logically	30-28	27-
QUALITY OF THE WRITING (15-0) --follows MLA formatting guidelines and is at least 1,000 words --is organized and coherent with well-structured paragraphs --all content in the essay supports the thesis --shows originality of voice --displays tone, sentence style, and word choice appropriate to an academic audience (casual, conversational, or expletives are NOT used) --controls grammar errors, which do not interfere with comprehension	15-14	13-
USE OF SOURCES (25-0) --MLK's text is analyzed and cited --integrates source material effectively through the use of quotations, paraphrase, or summary (as appropriate) --gives credit to sources from which facts, ideas, and quotations are taken using correct MLA in-text citations and a "Works Cited" page --in-text citations are correctly presented in MLA format --Works Cited page is its own page and is correctly presented in MLA format --if you used outside resources (not required), those sources are correctly cited in MLA format	25-22.5	22-

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2.1: Critical Reading--Reading Assignment

Critical Reading & Annotation

Critical Reading is active and engaged reading. This means fully understanding the text and asking questions of the text. As such, annotation is a key component of critical reading.

Critical Reading is also one of the most important skills you can have in any college class. Regardless of discipline or level of the course you are taking, your critical reading skills will help you understand new information, question and critique assumptions and premises, and enable you to innovate and imagine.

Setting and set-up

- Choose the quietest space you have access to.
- Turn off any media in which there is talking. Your brain cannot completely process both spoken words and written words.
- If you need some background noise, use a white noise machine, or ambient sound, or lyrical-less music.
- Get rid of any distractions. Turn off notifications, close out of browsers etc.
- Get comfortable, but not too comfortable: choose a comfortable upright position in which to sit. Laying down is not recommended (that's a recipe for an undesired nap).
- **Pre-read:** Quickly skim over the entire text paying attention to titles, headings and subheadings, highlighted sections, and images
- Assess how much you need to read and how difficult/ time consuming a careful reading will be.
- Make a reading plan based on this assessment. Know that ultimately you will fully and completely read the text three times. See **Three Real Reads**.
- Be sure to plan breaks. Breaks should be often and include getting up, stretching, moving your body, and drinking or eating.

Three Real Reads

Three Real Reads method is done in addition to the pre-reading noted above.

Note: You may want to cut corners here—don't do it! Reading a text once or even twice is not enough to understand to write a critical, accurate essay!

1. Read the text straight through without stopping to look words up or take notes. Read with the awareness that you will read it twice more, once to annotate, and another time after you receive the essay prompt. While you should not skim for this read, you can read faster than normal as long as you are comprehending the text.
2. Read the text again, and **Annotate**, according the directions in this text. Ensure you look up any unknown words and write their definitions. This reading will take the longest time—it's a slow read in which you will stop many times to look up words and take notes.
3. Read the text a third time, and as you read, consider the precise directions in the essay prompt for which are expected to use the text.

Annotation

Annotation is the practice of adding notes—comments and questions alike—to a text in addition to highlining, underlining or otherwise marking the text.

Annotation is a powerful tool that not only helps you return to a text to write about it later, but actually helps you comprehend and engage with the text as you read, making you understand the text better.

Critical Reading Annotations should be a mixture of in-text markings and marginal comments and should include the following:

- Indications of
 - major plot points/main ideas
 - supporting points
 - important names, places, events, or things

via highlighting or underlining directly in the text

- Definitions of words or phrases you are unfamiliar with (write in the margins)
- Questions of clarity, e.g. “What does it mean to ‘amplify minority voices in the college classroom’ ”? (write in the margins)
- Questions of rhetoric, e.g. “Why does the author use so much emotional language in the introduction?” (write in the margins)

Note:

- If you have a printed text, or you print it out, have multiple colors of pen and a highlighter.
- If you are working with text on screen, copy and paste the text into a word document where you can add notes and highlight digitally.
- If you are reading a pdf and don’t have the needed software to annotate such documents, print out the document. If your instructor doesn’t provide a text that can be annotated virtually, and that’s what you need, speak to them about it.

Here’s an example of an annotated text.

There are many ways to annotate, but unless—or until—you have a routine that works best for you, try the method described here.

After completing the setting and set-up tips above, do the following:

Critical Reading Annotation Tips

- Annotate by reading with a pen in hand or your hands on the keyboard/mouse!

Annotation is a key part of critical reading: you aren’t reading critically if you aren’t annotating. The two most basic moves of annotation are underlining and writing in the margins

- - Underline key points, especially those found in topic sentences
 - Highlight key words and terms by drawing a box around them
 - Although many students like to use highlighters, highlighting a text is not sufficient; if you do use a highlighter, you should also write in the margins
 - **Whatever you do, create a colored-coded key to indicate what various colors/highlights mean.**
- Write key ideas/main points in the margins
- Read with a dictionary ready to go. Have Google open or the dictionary website of your choice.
- As you read, ask questions
 - Don’t just read to understand what the writer is saying (although that’s important); read to figure out how, why, and the reason things happen since these are the deeper analytic questions
 - Stop often and ask questions: What is the writer’s main point? Why did they choose that example? Why are they highlighting those statistics? What is the author leaving out, or missing? What does the title mean? Why does the writer begin the text this way?
 - Also ask *how*, *why*, and *so what*
 - Write key questions in the margins
- Consider who the writer’s intended audience, purpose, the publisher, and the genre
- Evaluate the text’s arguments
 - First, identify all of the text’s arguments. Then, evaluate them: what assumptions or inferences are behind their argument? How credible do you find their evidence? How persuasive do you find their evidence? If applicable, break down complicated arguments into parts, examine those parts, and then evaluate how significant each part.
- Identify connections
 - What similarities do you see between the text and other texts that make similar arguments? Or texts that deal with similar topics? What’s different? What are your thoughts about the similarities or differences?

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2.2: Critical Reading--Classroom Activity

2.2 Activity

Self-reflection and knowing your strengths and weaknesses are crucial parts of excelling in college. Your self-awareness can not only help you create study schedules that actually meet your needs, but it can also tell you when it's time to try a new technique or reach out for help.

The critical reading strategies described in this chapter are ultimately just suggestions. While you will have to show evidence of annotation, and your critical understanding of the texts presented in this course is a key to your success, the ways you go about these tasks are up to you.

Write a paragraph considering the reading skills and strategies you've used in the past and your plan for the future. What has worked well for you? What hasn't worked well for you? How do you feel about reading in general, and how do you feel about reading for this class in particular? What are your thoughts about the techniques presented in this chapter? What techniques do you see yourself actually using for the required reading in this course? Be honest—it's safe to express your disdain and/or your perceived shortcomings here. Finally, include some tips on critical reading that you would recommend to a classmate. You will not have to share any other part of this writing assignment but be ready to share your suggestion(s) during class discussion.

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2.3: Critical Reading--Assignment

2.3 Assignment

Critically read and annotate the text below. Be sure to create a color-coded key, as seen in the example annotation. You will later write a summary of this short story and ultimately, you will compose an argumentative summary and response essay on the same text.

"Désirée's Baby"

by Kate Chopin

Kate Chopin, a white American woman author, wrote "Désirée's Baby" in late 1892. It was first published in *Vogue* —the same *Vogue* magazine that is published today— on January 14, 1893, the first of nineteen Kate Chopin stories that *Vogue* published. It was reprinted in Chopin's collection of stories, *Bayou Folk*, in 1894. You can find additional information about "Désirée's Baby," and Chopin's other works and biography at the Kate Chopin International Society website, from which the following text was acquired: <https://www.katechopin.org>.

Content Warning: Suicide, death, anti-black racism.

Your notes/vocab	Short story text
	As the day was pleasant, Madame Valmondé drove over to L'Abri to see Désirée and the baby. It made her laugh to think of Désirée with a baby. Why, it seemed but yesterday that Désirée was little more than a baby herself; when Monsieur in riding through the garden found her lying asleep in the shadow of the big stone pillar. The little one awoke in his arms and began to cry for "Dada." That was as much as she could do or say. Some people thought she might have strayed there of her own accord at a toddling age. The prevailing belief was that she had been purposely left by a party of Texans, whose canvas-covered wagon, late in the day, had crossed the ferry that crossed the plantation. In time Madame Valmondé abandoned every speculation but the one that Désirée had been sent to her by a beneficent Providence to be the child of her race, and was without child of the flesh. For the girl grew to be beautiful and gentle, affectionate and sincere,—the idol of Valmondé. It was no wonder, when she stood one day against the stone pillar in whose shadow she had lain asleep, eighteen years before, that Armand Aubigny riding by and seeing her love with her. That was the way all the Aubignys fell in love, as if struck by a pistol shot. The wonder was that he had not loved her before; for he had known her since she came home from Paris, a boy of eight, after his mother died there. The passion that awoke in him that day, when he saw her at the gate, swept along like an avalanche, or anything that drives headlong over all obstacles. Monsieur Valmondé grew practical and wanted things well considered: that is, the girl's obscure origin. Armand looked into her eyes and did not care. He was reminded of his mother. What did it matter about a name when he could give her one of the oldest and proudest in Louisiana? He ordered the corbeille from Paris, and contained himself with what he could; then they were married. Madame Valmondé had not seen Désirée and the baby for four weeks. When she reached L'Abri she shuddered at the first sight of it, as she always did. It was a sad sight. Many years had not known the gentle presence of a mistress, old Monsieur Aubigny having married and buried his wife in France, and she having loved her own land. The roof came down steep and black like a cowl, reaching out beyond the wide galleries that encircled the yellow stuccoed house. Big, solemn oaks grew close to it, and their reaching branches shadowed it like a pall. Young Aubigny's rule was a strict one, too, and under it his negroes had forgotten how to be gay, as they had been during the late and indulgent lifetime. The young mother was recovering slowly, and lay full length, in her soft white muslins and laces, upon a couch. The baby was beside her, upon her arm, where he had fallen. The yellow nurse woman sat beside a window fanning herself. Madame Valmondé bent her portly figure over Désirée and kissed her, holding her an instant tenderly in her arms. Then she turned to the child. "This is not the baby!" she exclaimed, in startled tones. French was the language spoken at Valmondé in those days. "I knew you would be astonished," laughed Désirée, "at the way he has grown. The little cochon de lait! Look at his legs, mamma, and his hands and finger-nails,—real fingers to cut them this morning! Isn't it true, Zandrine?" The woman bowed her turbaned head majestically, "Mais si, Madame." "And the way he cries," went on Désirée, "is deafening. Armand heard him the other day as far away as La Blanche's cabin." Madame Valmondé had never removed her eyes from the child. She lifted it and walked with it over to the window that was lightest. She scanned the baby narrowly, then Zandrine, whose face was turned to gaze across the fields. "Yes, the child has grown, has changed;" said Madame Valmondé, slowly, as she replaced it beside its mother. "What does Armand say?" Désirée's face became suffused with a glow that was happiness itself. "Oh, Armand is the proudest father in the parish, I believe, chiefly because it is a boy, to bear his name; though he says not,—that he would have loved a girl as well. I know he says that to please me. And mamma," she added, drawing Madame Valmondé's head down to her, and speaking in a whisper, "he has n't punished one of them since the baby is born. Even Négrillon, who pretended to have burnt his leg that he might rest from work—he only laughed, and said Négrillon was a great scamp. Oh, mamma, how much I love me." What Désirée said was true. Marriage, and later the birth of his son had softened Armand Aubigny's imperious and exacting nature greatly. This was what made the girl so loved him desperately. When he frowned she trembled, but loved him. When he smiled, she asked no greater blessing of God. But Armand's dark, handsome face, disfigured by frowns since the day he fell in love with her. When the baby was about three months old, Désirée awoke one day to the conviction that there was something in the air menacing her peace. It was at first too subtle to disquieting suggestion; an air of mystery among the blacks; unexpected visits from far-off neighbors who could hardly account for their coming. Then a strange, an awful manner, which she dared not ask him to explain. When he spoke to her, it was with averted eyes, from which the old love-light seemed to have gone out. He absented himself when there, avoided her presence and that of her child, without excuse. And the very spirit of Satan seemed suddenly to take hold of him in his dealings with the slaves, enough to die. She sat in her room, one hot afternoon, in her peignoir, listlessly drawing through her fingers the strands of her long, silky brown hair that hung about her shoulders. She lay asleep upon her own great mahogany bed, that was like a sumptuous throne, with its satin-lined half-canopy. One of La Blanche's little quadroon boys—half naked too—sat slowly with a fan of peacock feathers. Désirée's eyes had been fixed absently and sadly upon the baby, while she was striving to penetrate the threatening mist that she felt looked from her child to the boy who stood beside him, and back again; over and over. "Ah!" It was a cry that she could not help, which she was not conscious of having turned like ice in her veins, and a clammy moisture gathered upon her face. She tried to speak to the little quadroon boy; but no sound would come, at first. When he heard his name uttered, he looked up, and his mistress was pointing to the door. He took the soft fan, and obediently stole away, over the polished floor, on his bare tiptoes. She stayed motionless, with gaze riveted upon her child, and her face the picture of fright. Presently her husband entered the room, and without noticing her, went to a table among some papers which covered it. "Armand," she called to him, in a voice which must have stabbed him, if he was human. But he did not notice. "Armand," she said again. Then she rose and tottered toward the door, panting once more, clutching his arm, "look at our child. What does it mean? tell me." He coldly but gently loosened her fingers from about his arm and thrust the hand away from him. "Tell me what it means!" she cried despairingly. "It means," he answered lightly, "that the child is not white; it means that you are not white." A quick conception of all that this accusation meant for her nerved her with unwonted courage to deny it. "It is a lie; it is not true, I am white! Look at my hair, it is brown. Armand, you know they are gray. And my skin is fair," seizing his wrist. "Look at my hand; whiter than yours, Armand," she laughed hysterically. "As white as La Blanche's," he returned cruelly; and went away leaving her alone with her child. When she could hold a pen in her hand, she sent a despairing letter to Madame Valmondé. "My mother, they tell me I am not white. Armand has told me I am not white. For God's sake tell them it is not true. You must know it is not true. I shall die. I must die and live." The answer that came was as brief: "My own Désirée: Come home to Valmondé; back to your mother who loves you. Come with your child." When the letter reached Désirée she went with it to her husband's study, and laid it open upon the desk before which he sat. She was like a stone image: silent, white, motionless. In silence he ran his cold eyes over the written words. He said nothing. "Shall I go, Armand?" she asked in tones sharp with agonized suspense. "Yes, go." "Do you want me to go?" "Yes, I want you to go." He thought Almighty God had dealt cruelly and unjustly with him; and felt, somehow, that he was paying Him back in kind when he stabbed thus into his wife's soul the knife of her love, because of the unconscious injury she had brought upon his home and his name. She turned away like one stunned by a blow, and walked slowly towards the door, hoping he would call her back. "Good-by, Armand," she moaned. He did not answer her. That was his last blow at fate.

Désirée went in search of her child. Zandrine was pacing the sombre gallery with it. She took the little one from the nurse's arms with no word of explanation, and descending the steps, walked away, under the live-oak branches. It was an October afternoon; the sun was just sinking. Out in the still fields the negroes were picking cotton. Désirée had not changed the thin white garment nor the slippers which she wore. Her hair was uncovered and the sun's rays brought a golden gleam from its brown mass. She walked across a deserted field, where the stubble bruised her tender feet, so delicately shod, in the direction of the broad, beaten road which led to the far-off plantation of Valmondé. She disappeared among the reeds and willows that grew thick along the banks of the deep, sluggish bayou; and she did not come back again.

.....

Some weeks later there was a curious scene enacted at L'Abri. In the centre of the smoothly swept back yard was a great bonfire. Armand Aubigny sat in the wide highway, looking on at the view of the spectacle; and it was he who dealt out to a half dozen negroes the material which kept this fire ablaze. A graceful cradle of willow, with all its dainty furbishings, was laid upon the pyre, which had already been fed with the richness of a priceless layette. Then there were satin ones added to these; laces, too, and embroideries; bonnets and gloves; for the corbeille had been of rare quality. The last thing to go was a tiny bundle of letters; innocent little scribbles that Désirée had sent to him during the days of their espousal. There was the remnant of one which he took them. But it was not Désirée's; it was part of an old letter from his mother to his father. He read it. She was thanking God for the blessing of her husband's "But, above all," she wrote, "night and day, I thank the good God for having so arranged our lives that our dear Armand will never know that his mother, who adores him, is cursed with the brand of slavery."

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3.1: The Rhetorical Situation--Reading Selection

14.1 Understanding the situation

What's a text?

A text is anything that can be “read,” i.e., consumed and interpreted. A book, an article, a YouTube video, a TikTok, a presidential campaign poster, and a syllabus are all examples of texts.

What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is persuasive communication, or the art of persuasive speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating through a text. The persuasion that rhetoric refers to is usually understood as intentional, e.g. the creator of a text must have the intention to persuade in order for it to be rhetorically analyzed. However, many rhetoricians (people who study rhetoric and/or carefully craft their own text based on the rules of rhetoric) argue that every communication is rhetoric because we are always trying to persuade someone of something.

The term “rhetoric” is often pejoratively used to refer to language or texts that are clever or cunning, but lacking substance, or in reference to a text that is artfully done but with scarce, poor-quality, or false content. For instance, someone might say “all his rhetoric is a waste of time” regarding a politician’s floral descriptions and promises he couldn’t possibly fulfill in his role. In this way, rhetoric is sometimes used to indicate trickery or deception. These are colloquial understandings of rhetoric: the studying and employing of rhetorical principles from the Aristotelian method that we’re using, is actually a pursuit of truth. By considering the audience’s characteristics, experiences, needs, and desires and then tailoring the messaging of the content to that, rhetoric seeks to convey the content—the truthful content—in ways that the audience is able and/or willing to consume. Rhetoric is misused when, in considering the audience, it seeks to manipulate the truth or the will of the audience.

In short, rhetoric refers to *how* something is said, written, or otherwise conveyed.

The Rhetorical Situation¹

The *Rhetorical Situation* refers to the circumstances that bring texts into existence. The concept emphasizes that writing is a social activity, produced by people in particular situations for particular goals. It helps individuals understand that, because writing is highly situated and responds to specific human needs in a particular time and place, texts should be produced and interpreted with these needs and contexts in mind.

Thinking carefully about the situations in which you write, or produce texts, can lead you to produce more meaningful texts that are appropriate for the situation and responsive to others’ needs, values, and expectations. This is true whether writing a workplace e-mail or completing a college writing assignment.

As a reader and consumer of texts, considering the rhetorical situation can help you develop a more detailed understanding of others and their texts.

Basically, the rhetorical situation can help writers and readers think through and determine *why texts exist, what they aim to do, and how they do it* in particular situations.

The **author/creator**, the **topic**, the **context**, the **purpose**, and **audience** constitute the Rhetorical Situation in which the rhetoric occurs. While these five elements are treated as five separate things, they’re interconnected. For instance, who the author is greatly influences the topic, and the context and the author themselves shape the purpose.

¹ Partial Section Source Attribution:

Jory, Justin. “The Rhetorical Situation.” Pressbooks, 2016. <https://pressbooks.pub/openenglishat...cal-situation/>.

What do we need to know about the author/creator?

We don’t need their life story, but we need to know what enables them to speak/write credibly on the subject. This credibility can come from identity within a group resulting in relevant experience, verified experiences, academic degrees, or other certified training and education. You’ll notice the common thread through all of those is that an outside source asserts competency or

experience in a particular area. There have been numerous nonfiction or memoir writers who were discredited because it was ultimately found out that the experience they claimed was fake. So, even though their narratives remained compelling stories, they lost their ability to speak credibly on the subject. To this point, the author/creator's character and reputation are also very important. Think of any group or individual regarded as a "trusted news source"-why is that so? All the reporters, fact-checkers, and journalists cannot possibly have all the degrees and experiences to allow them to credibly speak on topics as diverse as Israeli politics to deforestation in Western Canada. While their educations and experiences provide them with a framework of ethical journalism, we, the audience, trust such news organizations largely because of reputation.

What's an author's purpose?

The purpose is why the author creates the text. For this course, and arguably in general, their purpose will always be to persuade the audience of something, implicitly or explicitly. **The questions for us to discern are, what exactly is the author/creator trying to persuade their audience of? How are they going about this persuasion, and how effective or persuasive is that argument?**

What's an intended audience and how is that different from the audience?

Despite the origin of the word "audience" suggesting those who hear a message, for our purposes, is anyone who the author expects will "read" the text. As the terms then suggest, the intended audience is the audience the author intended to create the text for, whereas the audience is anyone who happens upon the text and consumes it... Note that the intended audience may be quite different from the audience, especially since the advent of social media. For example, the German live satirical/comedic news show *Die Anstalt* is produced in Germany and uses the German language exclusively: the shows intended audience, generally, is the German public, in the time frame in which the show airs. However, since many of *Die Anstalt*'s episodes have been uploaded to Youtube with subtitles in a variety of languages, their audience has become international and not tied to a given time. The intended audience's context or situation and knowledge must be considered when rhetorically analyzing a text.

What's the topic?

The topic refers to the issue at hand, the major subjects the writer, text, and audience address.

What's the context?

The context refers to other direct and indirect social, cultural, geographic, political, and institutional **factors that likely influence the writer, text, and audience in a particular situation. This includes, but isn't limited to the following:**

- the time/date of the text
- the publisher, if applicable
- location of creation and publication and/or medium
- the circumstance(s) in which the text was produced (e.g. what was happening in the world and the locality of the creator as they created the text)
- the type and medium of the text (literal text, image, sound, physical, virtual)

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3.2: Activity- The Rhetorical Situation

14.2 Activity

As discussed, texts are usually thought of as written word-based, but they can also be audio and/or visual. For this class activity, consider the image below the text to be analyzed. Study it, and then read the context below it. Then complete “The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet” below.



Credit: Photo by Tara Winstead, 2021

The text is a stock free image intended to be used to promote autism awareness. It features only three words—accept, understand, and love—and it has a white background with blue puzzle pieces bordering the image.

Here's some more context on the general connection between (blue) puzzle pieces and autism awareness from Cassandra Crosman's 2019 *In the Loop about Neurodiversity* article "The Ableist History of The Puzzle Piece Symbol for Autism:"

Today, the most recognized use of the puzzle piece is through the organization, Autism Speaks, who popularized the symbol. Since the organization was founded in 2005, they have used the puzzle piece logo to spread autism awareness. Even today, the puzzle piece logo of Autism Speaks can be seen on it's [sic] website, in advertisements and public service announcements, on T-shirts, on pins NBA coaches wear in April, and in their Autism Walks. Autism Speaks said in a statement that, "The blue Autism Speaks puzzle piece has had a huge influence on raising awareness of autism around the world, which is why we believe it is still a worthy and effective logo. It represents the search for answers that will lead to greater understanding and acceptance of people on the autism spectrum, their diverse challenges, abilities and strengths." The "search for answers" that Autism Speaks refers to is the search for cures and treatments. Autism Speaks has previously called autism a disease, and has said statements such as, "This disease has taken our children away. It's time to get them back," and have called autistic people "burdens" and "tragedies," and has called autism itself an "epidemic." In their "I am Autism" advertisement, Autism Speaks made statements such as that autism "robs children of their dreams," and that autistic children "live behind a wall." The puzzle piece is also blue, which implies that autism only appears in males or that males are "more autistic" than females or other gender minorities such as transgender and nonbinary people.

The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet

Name of Text	
Author(s)/creator(s)	
Year of publication and publisher/publication	N/A
Topic(s)	
Main argument/ thesis statement	
Describe relevant elements of the author's identity, experience/education, and reputation.	N/A
Context of the text (what relevant events were happening in the locality and world when the text was created?)	
Who's the intended audience? What do you know about them?	
Who's the audience? How do they differ from the intended audience?	
What is the author's purpose? What do they hope to accomplish in creating the text?	

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3.3: The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet

14.3 Assignment

Read the entire text below, “Analyzing MLK’s ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail’” including the “Context” section. Then, complete “The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet.”

The Rhetorical Situation Worksheet

Name of Text	
Author(s)/creator(s)	
Year of publication and publisher/publication	
Topic(s)	
Main argument/ thesis statement	
Describe relevant elements of the author’s identity, experience/education, and reputation.	
Context of the text (what relevant events were happening in the locality and world when the text was created?)	
Who’s the intended audience? What do you know about them?	
Who’s the audience? How do they differ from the intended audience?	
What is the author’s purpose? What do they hope to accomplish in creating the text?	

Analyzing MLK’s “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

“Letter from a Birmingham Jail”

by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Context

Composed in early April 1963 during the civil rights movement, King began writing it on the margins of a newspaper while incarcerated.

While we mostly think of King as a civil rights activist, he was also a clergyman, like the members of his stated, intended audience. This means he was a Christian religious leader and that he went to seminary—a specialized postsecondary institution that focuses on instructing students in theology (the study of God) and religious traditions and texts while training them to become religious leaders. King also received a PhD in theology. In short, MLK was also a trained, very well-educated Christian pastor.

MLK was already president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which was, and still is, an important Black civil rights organization.

SCLC’s campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, resulted in King’s arrest and imprisonment. King was arrested for violating a recent ruling stating that no one was allowed to demonstrate or picket. King was aware of this rule and he chose to disobey it for the reasons he outlines in his letter.

While in jail, King read “A Call for Unity” in a newspaper—the article was written by eight local white clergymen who disagreed with King’s tactics. While the article did not specifically mention King, it was clear to King that it was about him and his methods of seeking justice. King did not have any paper in his jail cell, so he wrote his response on the margins of the newspaper, until his lawyer was able to get him a notepad.

Without the consent of Dr. King, the excerpts from the letter were published on May 19, 1963, in the *New York Post Sunday Magazine*. The letter was first consensually and completely published as “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” a month later by the *American Friends Service Committee* in May 1963. It was then published multiple times over the next three months: in the June 1963 issue of *Liberation*, the June 12, 1963, edition of *The Christian Century*, the June 24, 1963, edition of *The New Leader*, the July 1963 edition of *The Progressive* under the headline “Tears of Love,” and in the August 1963 edition of *The Atlantic Monthly* under the headline “The Negro Is Your Brother.”

Audio

Audio recording of MLK reading the text (55 minutes) : <https://okra.stanford.edu/media/audio/630416001.mp3>

Text

16 April 1963

My Dear Fellow Clergymen:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities “unwise and untimely.” Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statement in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against “outsiders coming in.” I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here. I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their “thus saith the Lord” far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco Roman world, so am I compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial “outside agitator” idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city’s white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self purification; and direct action. We have gone through all these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved

bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants--for example, to remove the stores' humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained. As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic-withdrawal program would be the by product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.

Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoral election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run off, we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain in civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a direct action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant "Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we still creep at horse and buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six year old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five year old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you are forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness"--then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience. You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may well ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there are two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the first to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all."

Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I it" relationship for an "I thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and sinful. Paul Tillich has said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal. Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First-Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to see the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.

Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's antireligious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with all its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God consciousness and never ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber. I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "All Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co workers with God, and without this hard work, time itself becomes an

ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that I stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle-class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."

I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle. If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black nationalist ideologies--a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides -and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist. But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime--the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and

committed themselves to it. They are still all too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some—such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle—have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger-lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation. Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a nonsegregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church. I felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leaders; all too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.

I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Wallace gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful—in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God-intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By

their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests. Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Far from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent--and often even vocal--sanction of things as they are.

But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment. I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation -and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands. Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.

It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handling the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia, but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy two year old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feets is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the

South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil-rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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5.1: Readings for Academic Essay Structure

6.1 The Essay and the Formula

We tend to think of writing as a primarily creative endeavor. Writing of any sort does indeed have creative elements as we are literally creating a text; further, the act of stringing together words to create meaning is always creative as well. To those of us inclined to create, who love words, and making meaning, academic writing can sometimes be stifling. This perceived stifling quality is also a benefit to those of us not creatively inclined, or those who prefer rules and regulations.

Academic writing is a mixture of creativity and the application of a moderately complex formula. In this chapter, we will discuss and practice the general formula of an academic essay by learning its proper structure.

While the act of writing itself has a lot of creative elements, the majority of academic writing relies on the successful applications of formulas.

In this chapter, we'll learn the organization formula. To begin, read the following student multi-source essay that would receive an A in this course. As you read, take notes on what you notice about the structure of essay, i.e. the order of ideas within paragraphs, and the order and constitution of each paragraph.

Example Student Essay

Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today

Most everyone at some point in their lives will become disabled. This is a truth we often do not want to consider because it makes us feel scared and vulnerable. However, that fear and vulnerability is something that millions of Americans, of all ages, face every day with little or no emotional, social, or financial support. “Disability” is an umbrella term that can refer to physical, mental, or intellectual impairments, or combinations of them, that make engaging in certain activities or the world in general more difficult or even impossible. Disability occurs because of genetics, environmental factors, disease, injuries, and traumas. While they can technically be short term—for example, a broken arm—disabilities are most commonly understood as long term and even lifelong. Examples of disabilities range from being blind, to autism, to having an amputation, to ADHD. US society has improved in its treatment of disabled people, particularly since the inception for the disability rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the resulting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our understanding of what disability is has broadened and become more widespread: we regularly see disabled people in films and in daily life. However, there is still much work to be done to fully include and support disabled people. [In the United States today, there is inadequate media portrayals, social acceptance, and financial support and opportunities of disabled individuals which maintains their marginalization.](#)

[The media depicts disabled people in harmful ways by portraying them as childish or as jokes, if they choose to depict disabled people at all. While media portrayal of disabled folks has improved, today we still see negative stereotypes and underrepresentation.](#) The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants’ lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article [“Exploitation for Acceptance,”](#) author Maree Wolf states “while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic’s pursuit of community and connection. The participant’s lives aren’t treated as real or serious—they are treated as jokes or ‘aww, cute!’ moments.” LotS’s cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people. No person’s humanity should be reduced to a joke or gimmick. Often, when an autistic participant is going about their normal activities in the best way they can in LotS, background music meant to indicate silliness or youthfulness will play (Wolf). This signals to the audience that the autistic individuals they see on their screens are similarly silly or infantile, even when they are being serious. The show conveys the message that autistic people are funny and indeed of protection, but also very different than “normal people.” The presumably non-autistic viewer can feel good that they are viewing autistic people positively and in need of protection, rather than as stupid or unimportant. Most troubling is that LotS is a very popular, well rated show (Wolf) and many disabled folks do defend it because of the representation it offers. However, it stands out as just one example of how the current popular media harmfully depicts disabled people.

Social acceptance of disabled people has also improved in the past several decades, but it is also insufficient and problematic for disabled people's overall well-being. Acceptance entails more than tolerating or providing bare-minimum support: social acceptance looks like full inclusion and advocacy; it looks like reframing what is “normal” and meeting people where they’re at. However, social acceptance is in short supply for too many disabled people. In “Uninspired: The Reality of Living with Disability,” by Tavia Sousanis, the lives of “high achieving” disabled people are explored. When Adriana, a 28-year-old civil engineer who is unable to use her legs, got engaged to her long-time boyfriend, she was met with hostility rather than joy. Author Tavia Sousanis reports Adriana’s experience: “I could tell his friends, who I know liked me, were like, *are you really going to marry the paraplegic girl?*” Adriana laughed, but her eyes filled with tears. She continued ‘And his mom—I love her, we’re good now—but she cried when he said he proposed to me because she thought my disability meant she wouldn’t have grandchildren...that’s not even true.’” Adriana’s story shows that despite being accomplished and well-liked, she was reduced to her disability status and deemed undesirable. The results for her were heart-breaking. Several others in Sousanis’s article describe similar situations wherein they are regarded as “courageous,” “awesome,” and “truly inspiring” by those around them because of their disabilities, but when it came to being hired for a good job or being accepted into a new friend or family group, they are often painfully excluded. Maree Wolf also maintains that disabled people are understood as useful when they provoke sympathy or even gratitude in the able-bodied but are disregarded when they need accommodations or true acceptance (“Exploitation for Acceptance”). All humans need some measure of social acceptance to not only fulfill the innate emotional need for connection and kinship, but also to help ensure their physical and medical needs are met. The lack of social acceptance that many disabled people face poses a serious and unacceptable threat to their well-being.

For disabled individuals who are at all able to work, employment is a significant struggle, wages and benefits are low, and thus their needs are often unmet. In “Disabled Workers Saw Record Employment Gains in 2023, But Gaps Remain,” by Kennedy Andara et al., it’s reported that only 38.2 % of disabled, working age adult men were employed in 2023. This is actually a significant improvement, a record low, but it’s clear that this is a problem when compared to the 80% of employed able-bodied men in the same year (Andara et al). It should also be noted that these statistics describe any type of employment—full or part time. Andara et al. notes that “people with disabilities are almost twice as likely to work part time.” This means that actual earnings, access to employer-provided healthcare, and other necessary benefits like paid time off and, ironically, disability insurance may be far less available to disabled workers. Part-time jobs offer less money annually, even if the hourly rate is the same as full-time, and part-time jobs rarely offer paid time off or any other benefits. Further, according to Andara et al., “Black and Hispanic disabled people experienced higher unemployment rates in 2023—at 10.2 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively. The unemployment rates of these groups are consistently above the average for disabled workers, due to the additional hardships of intersecting and compounding racism and ableism.” Not only do disabled people of color experience ableism, and the systemic disadvantages of it, but they experience a compounded disadvantage due to racism. The painful irony is that many disabled people need healthcare and daily assistance that costs much more than the needs of the average, able-bodied people. The result for all disabled people in general is economic difficulty and poverty, and unmet needs.

In conclusion, despite some increases in visibility and legal protections for disabled people, their marginalization remains a serious issue in the US. When portrayed in media, disabled people are too often depicted as juvenile or as inspiration for non-disabled people, furthering harmful stereotypes and exclusion. While social acceptance has improved, it’s still lacking and causes emotional harm and even physical neglect in disabled populations. Finally, disabled people’s access to acquire and maintain employment that offers a living wage and much needed benefits is very limited and results in increased economic hardships. Increasing and furthering the cause of disability rights is crucial not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because disability will—sooner or later—touch all of our lives.

This successful essay employs the following outline formula:

I. Introduction

a. Introductory paragraph

i. Hook

ii. Introductory information: this depends on the assignment. It could be a Summary of the topic, a summary of the article, or just pertinent information that the reader needs to know about the topic

iii. Bridge to thesis

iv. Thesis statement

II. Body Paragraphs

a. Body Paragraph 1

i. Topic Sentence that is one of the argumentative reasons your thesis is true. The topic sentence must directly relate to, and help prove, your thesis.

ii. Explanation of the ideas/concepts for the topic sentence

iii. Sub point 1

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)

2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence

3. Transition

[repeat the sub point pattern as much as needed]

iv. Sub point 2

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)

2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence

v. Concluding sentence for the paragraph that address the topic sentence, and, ideally, helps transition to next body paragraph.

b. Body Paragraph 2

i. Topic Sentence that is one of the argumentative reasons your thesis is true. The topic sentence must directly relate to, and help prove, your thesis.

ii. Explanation of the ideas/concepts for the topic sentence

iii. Sub point 1

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)

2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence

3. Transition

[repeat the sub point pattern as much as needed]

iv. Sub point 2

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)

2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence

v. Concluding sentence for the paragraph that address the topic sentence, and, ideally, helps transition to next body paragraph.

c. Body Paragraph 3

i. Topic Sentence that is one of the argumentative reasons your thesis is true. The topic sentence must directly relate to, and help prove, your thesis.

ii. Explanation of the ideas/concepts for the topic sentence

iii. Sub point 1

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)

2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence

3. Transition

[repeat the sub point pattern as much as needed]

iv. Sub point 2

1. Evidence (from a source—can be a quote, summary, or paraphrase; must be cited properly)
 2. Explanation of evidence and connection to topic sentence
 - v. Concluding sentence for the paragraph that address the topic sentence, and, ideally, helps transition to next body paragraph.
- [Repeat the body paragraphs as much as needed]

III. Conclusion

a. Concluding Paragraph

- i. In one sentence, restate your core thesis argument, or entire thesis statement (use different words).
- ii. Summarize each main support. If you've properly done your topic sentences, you should be able to restate each paragraph's topic sentence for this part (1 sentence per main support /paragraph).
- iii. Provide a final concluding thought. This can mirror your hook.

Note: no new info, no quotes in the concluding paragraph.

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5.2: Activity for Academic Essay Structure

Using the outline formula presented above and the example student essay **Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today**

as the content, complete the visual essay outline.

	Introductory paragraph
Hook	
Introductory information	
Bridge to thesis	
Thesis statement	
	Body Paragraph 1
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	
	Body Paragraph 2
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	
	Body Paragraph 3
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	
	Conclusion

Restatement of thesis	
Summary of main point 1	
Summary of main point 2	
Summary of main point 3	
Final, concluding thought	

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5.3: Assignment for Academic Essay Structure

As a way to organize your thoughts and give yourself a broader view, use the essay assignment you are currently working on to complete the form below. Depending on where you are in the process, you may not be able to completely fill out the entire form. That's ok! Fill it in as you progress.

It's a good idea to have several copies of this blank worksheet: each iteration of your essay will need to be re-outlined.

Outline	Essay title:
	Introductory paragraph
Hook	
Introductory information	
Bridge to thesis	
Thesis statement	
	Body Paragraph 1
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	
	Body Paragraph 2
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	
	Body Paragraph 3
Topic Sentence	
Explanation of the ideas	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Transition	
Evidence	
Explanation of evidence	
Paragraph Conclusion	

	Conclusion
Restatement of thesis	
Summary of main point 1	
Summary of main point 2	
Summary of main point 3	
Final, concluding thought	

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6.1: Argumentation-- Readings

4.1 Introduction: Arguments are everywhere

You may be surprised to hear that the word “argument” does not have to be written anywhere in your assignment for it to be an important part of your task. In fact, making an argument—expressing a point of view on a subject and supporting it with evidence—is often the aim of academic writing. Your instructors may assume that you know this and thus may not explain the importance of arguments in class.

Most material you learn in college is or has been debated by someone, somewhere, at some time. Even when the material you read or hear is presented as a simple fact, it may actually be one person’s interpretation of a set of information. Instructors may call on you to examine that interpretation and defend it, refute it, or offer some new view of your own. In writing assignments, you will almost always need to do more than just summarize information that you have gathered or regurgitate facts that have been discussed in class. You will need to develop a point of view on or interpretation of that material and provide evidence for your position.

Consider an example. For nearly 2000 years, educated people in many Western cultures believed that bloodletting—deliberately causing a sick person to lose blood—was the most effective treatment for a variety of illnesses. The claim that bloodletting is beneficial to human health was not widely questioned until the 1800s, and some physicians continued to recommend bloodletting as late as the 1920s. Medical practices have now changed because some people began to doubt the effectiveness of bloodletting; these people argued against it and provided convincing evidence. Human knowledge grows out of such differences of opinion, and scholars like your instructors spend their lives engaged in debate over what claims may be counted as accurate in their fields. In their courses, they want you to engage in similar kinds of critical thinking and debate.

Argumentation is not just what your instructors do. We all use argumentation on a daily basis, and you probably already have some skill at crafting an argument. The more you improve your skills in this area, the better you will be at thinking critically, reasoning, making choices, and weighing evidence.

Making a claim

What is an argument? In academic writing, an argument is usually a main idea, often called a “claim” or “thesis statement,” backed up with evidence that supports the idea. In the majority of college papers, you will need to make some sort of claim and use evidence to support it, and your ability to do this well will separate your papers from those of students who see assignments as mere accumulations of fact and detail. In other words, gone are the happy days of being given a “topic” about which you can write anything. It is time to stake out a position and prove why it is a good position for a thinking person to hold. See our [handout on thesis statements](#).

Claims can be as simple as “Protons are positively charged and electrons are negatively charged,” with evidence such as, “In this experiment, protons and electrons acted in such and such a way.” Claims can also be as complex as “Genre is the most important element to the contract of expectations between filmmaker and audience,” using reasoning and evidence such as, “defying genre expectations can create a complete apocalypse of story form and content, leaving us stranded in a sort of genre-less abyss.” In either case, the rest of your paper will detail the reasoning and evidence that have led you to believe that your position is best.

When beginning to write a paper, ask yourself, “What is my point?” For example, the point of this handout is to help you become a better writer, and we are arguing that an important step in the process of writing effective arguments is understanding the concept of argumentation. If your papers do not have a main point, they cannot be arguing for anything. Asking yourself what your point is can help you avoid a mere “information dump.” Consider this: your instructors probably know a lot more than you do about your subject matter. Why, then, would you want to provide them with material they already know? **Instructors are usually looking for two things:**

1. Proof that you understand the material
2. A demonstration of your ability to use or apply the material in ways that go beyond what you have read or heard.

This second part can be done in many ways: you can critique the material, apply it to something else, or even just explain it in a different way. In order to succeed at this second step, though, you must have a particular point to argue.

Arguments in academic writing are usually complex and take time to develop. Your argument will need to be more than a simple or obvious statement such as “Frank Lloyd Wright was a great architect.” Such a statement might capture your initial impressions of Wright as you have studied him in class; however, you need to look deeper and express specifically what caused that “greatness.” Your instructor will probably expect something more complicated, such as “Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture combines elements of European modernism, Asian aesthetic form, and locally found materials to create a unique new style,” or “There are many strong similarities between Wright’s building designs and those of his mother, which suggests that he may have borrowed some of her ideas.” To develop your argument, you would then define your terms and prove your claim with evidence from Wright’s drawings and buildings and those of the other architects you mentioned.

Evidence

Do not stop with having a point. You have to back up your point with evidence. The strength of your evidence, and your use of it, can make or break your argument. See our [handout on evidence](#). You already have the natural inclination for this type of thinking, if not in an academic setting. Think about how you talked your parents into letting you borrow the family car. Did you present them with lots of instances of your past trustworthiness? Did you make them feel guilty because your friends’ parents all let them drive? Did you whine until they just wanted you to shut up? Did you look up statistics on teen driving and use them to show how you didn’t fit the dangerous-driver profile? These are all types of argumentation, and they exist in academia in similar forms.

Every field has slightly different requirements for acceptable evidence, so familiarize yourself with some arguments from within that field instead of just applying whatever evidence you like best. Pay attention to your textbooks and your instructor’s lectures. What types of argument and evidence are they using? The type of evidence that sways an English instructor may not work to convince a sociology instructor. Find out what counts as proof that something is true in that field. Is it statistics, a logical development of points, something from the object being discussed (art work, text, culture, or atom), the way something works, or some combination of more than one of these things?

Be consistent with your evidence. Unlike negotiating for the use of your parents’ car, a college paper is not the place for an all-out blitz of every type of argument. You can often use more than one type of evidence within a paper, but make sure that within each section you are providing the reader with evidence appropriate to each claim. So, if you start a paragraph or section with a statement like “Putting the student seating area closer to the basketball court will raise player performance,” do not follow with your evidence on how much more money the university could raise by letting more students go to games for free. Information about how fan support raises player morale, which then results in better play, would be a better follow-up. Your next section could offer clear reasons why undergraduates have as much or more right to attend an undergraduate event as wealthy alumni—but this information would not go in the same section as the fan support stuff. You cannot convince a confused person, so keep things tidy and ordered.

Counterargument

One way to strengthen your argument and show that you have a deep understanding of the issue you are discussing is to anticipate and address counterarguments or objections. By considering what someone who disagrees with your position might have to say about your argument, you show that you have thought things through, and you dispose of some of the reasons your audience might have for not accepting your argument. Recall our discussion of student seating in the Dean Dome. To make the most effective argument possible, you should consider not only what students would say about seating but also what alumni who have paid a lot to get good seats might say.

You can generate counterarguments by asking yourself how someone who disagrees with you might respond to each of the points you’ve made or your position as a whole. **If you can’t immediately imagine another position, here are some strategies to try:**

- Do some research. It may seem to you that no one could possibly disagree with the position you are arguing, but someone probably has. For example, some people argue that a hotdog is a sandwich. If you are making an argument concerning, for example, the characteristics of an exceptional sandwich, you might want to see what some of these people have to say.
- Talk with a friend or with your teacher. Another person may be able to imagine counterarguments that haven’t occurred to you.
- Consider your conclusion or claim and the premises of your argument and imagine someone who denies each of them. For example, if you argued, “Cats make the best pets. This is because they are clean and independent,” you might imagine someone saying, “Cats do not make the best pets. They are dirty and needy.”

Once you have thought up some counterarguments, consider how you will respond to them—will you concede that your opponent has a point but explain why your audience should nonetheless accept your argument? Will you reject the counterargument and explain why it is mistaken? Either way, you will want to leave your reader with a sense that your argument is stronger than opposing arguments.

When you are summarizing opposing arguments, be charitable. Present each argument fairly and objectively, rather than trying to make it look foolish. You want to show that you have considered the many sides of the issue. If you simply attack or caricature your opponent (also referred to as presenting a “straw man”), you suggest that your argument is only capable of defeating an extremely weak adversary, which may undermine your argument rather than enhance it.

It is usually better to consider one or two serious counterarguments in some depth, rather than to give a long but superficial list of many different counterarguments and replies.

Be sure that your reply is consistent with your original argument. If considering a counterargument changes your position, you will need to go back and revise your original argument accordingly.

Audience

Audience is a very important consideration in argument. Take a look at our [handout on audience](#). A lifetime of dealing with your family members has helped you figure out which arguments work best to persuade each of them. Maybe whining works with one parent, but the other will only accept cold, hard statistics. Your kid brother may listen only to the sound of money in his palm. It’s usually wise to think of your audience in an academic setting as someone who is perfectly smart but who doesn’t necessarily agree with you. You are not just expressing your opinion in an argument (“It’s true because I said so”), and in most cases your audience will know something about the subject at hand—so you will need sturdy proof. At the same time, do not think of your audience as capable of reading your mind. You have to come out and state both your claim and your evidence clearly. Do not assume that because the instructor knows the material, he or she understands what part of it you are using, what you think about it, and why you have taken the position you’ve chosen.

Critical reading

Critical reading is a big part of understanding argument. Although some of the material you read will be very persuasive, do not fall under the spell of the printed word as authority. Very few of your instructors think of the texts they assign as the last word on the subject. Remember that the author of every text has an agenda, something that he or she wants you to believe. This is OK—everything is written from someone’s perspective—but it’s a good thing to be aware of. For more information on objectivity and bias and on reading sources carefully, read our handouts on [evaluating print sources](#) and [reading to write](#).

Take notes either in the margins of your source (if you are using a photocopy or your own book) or on a separate sheet as you read. Put away that highlighter! Simply highlighting a text is good for memorizing the main ideas in that text—it does not encourage critical reading. Part of your goal as a reader should be to put the author’s ideas in your own words. Then you can stop thinking of these ideas as facts and start thinking of them as arguments.

When you read, ask yourself questions like “What is the author trying to prove?” and “What is the author assuming I will agree with?” Do you agree with the author? Does the author adequately defend her argument? What kind of proof does she use? Is there something she leaves out that you would put in? Does putting it in hurt her argument? As you get used to reading critically, you will start to see the sometimes hidden agendas of other writers, and you can use this skill to improve your own ability to craft effective arguments.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find additional publications. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the [UNC Libraries citation tutorial](#). We revise these tips periodically and welcome feedback.

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Thesis Statements and argumentation

First, let's review a few definitions.

What is a premise?

A premise is the foundation for an argument: it's the reason and the cause; it also serves as evidence.

What is a conclusion (in argumentation)?

It's the effect of the premises. It's the statement that the premises work to support.

Note that premises and conclusions are NOT particular to arguments: they are particular to logical statements of any sort. For example, take the statement "Joe Biden won the November 2020 presidential election and whoever wins the presidential election in November of one year becomes the president of the United States in January of next year. Therefore, Joe Biden became the president of the United States in January 2021."

Premise: Joe Biden won the November 2020 presidential election.

Premise: Whoever wins the presidential election in November of one year becomes the president of the United States in January of next year,

Conclusion: Joe Biden became the president of the United States in January 2021.

Each part—both premises and the conclusion—are facts, not arguments. Nevertheless, this statement is logical and contains premises and a conclusion.

What is a thesis statement?

The thesis statement is the entire point—the main point—of your essay and in argumentative essays, it presents a clear position that is reasonably debatable.

The thesis statement should be a sentence, maybe two, and should always be the last sentence of your introductory paragraph. It should also suggest the structure of your essay.

Everything in your essay must be in service of the thesis statement: your intro provides context so the reader can accept the thesis, the body proves the thesis (and should do nothing else), and the conclusion reiterates your thesis and summarizes the evidence you have already provided.

Testing arguments

Arguments are not explorations of topics, though you must explore a topic to understand it enough to formulate and prove a sufficient argument. Arguments are also not purely informative, though they do present information. An accessible way to test whether or not a statement is an argument is to check if the statement can be reasonably argued against.

A. In the US, college costs an average of \$37,000 a year as of 2023.

B. The cost of college in the US has become exorbitant and most cannot afford it.

First, let's consider statement A: can it be logically and reasonably argued against? This statement is a statement of fact. Assuming it is true, no, statement A cannot be argued against reasonably. It would not be reasonable to say, "In the US, college does not cost an average of \$37,000 a year in 2023". If statement A is not true, then the statement is false and should not be considered at all. Therefore, statement A is not an argument.

Statement B, however, can be reasonably argued against. A counterargument could say “Considering the need for adequate wages for faculty and staff of a college, along with building maintenance and technology and media costs, the cost of college is not exorbitant—it’s fair and reasonable.” Another counterargument could say “With the help of scholarships, financial aid, and workplace tuition reimbursement, college is fairly affordable for many.” While we may disagree with any of these statements, they are all logical. Because statement B can be argued against, it is an argument.

As you can see an argument consists of a set of statements called premises that form the foundation for affirming another statement called the conclusion.

Let’s revise statement B from the above example to create a thesis statement for an essay.

Since the cost of college in the US has become exorbitant and most cannot afford it, the government should fully subsidize it.

Premise

Premise 1	the cost of college in the US has become exorbitant
Premise 2	most cannot afford it [the cost of college]
Conclusion	the government should fully subsidize it [the cost of college]

There are several *unstated or underlying premises* that also support this argument. These unstated premises will not be debated or argued in the essay because they are taken as givens. These unstated premises, all of which are arguments, are generally agreed upon by the public.

- College is worthwhile and valuable to those who attend
- People deserve to be able to go to college
- College should not be cost-prohibitive

It’s important to consider the unstated premises of your argument because of your intended audience. In the example above,

If, for example you know your audience to be skeptical of the use or value of college—perhaps some even think a college education is harmful—you can no longer use “College is worthwhile and valuable to those who attend” as an unstated premise—you’d would have to make it a premise that you do address and argue.

It’s also important to know the underlying premises of your argument so that you craft rhetorically useful counterarguments. Counterarguments are discussed more fully in a different chapter, but for now it should be noted that counterarguments should only debate premises or conclusions of your argument, not an underlying premise of your argument.

Given the increase in anti-trans bills in many state and local level governments and social bias that has followed, the physical health care, mental health care, and the overall well-being of transgender people in the US is at risk.

Premise 1	anti-trans bills in many state and local level governments have increased
Premise 2	social bias against trans people has increased
Conclusion	the physical health care, mental health care, and the overall well-being of transgender people in the US is at risk

Notice that this argument has 3 parts to its conclusion:

- the physical health care of transgender people in the US is at risk
- mental health care of transgender people in the US is at risk
- the overall well-being of transgender people in the US is at risk

This thesis statement also suggests the structure of the essay. From this thesis statement, we can assume the following structure:

1. Introductory paragraph

2. Body Paragraph 1: anti-trans bills in many state and local level governments have increased
3. Body Paragraph 2: social bias against trans people has increased
4. Body Paragraph 3: the physical health care of transgender people in the US is at risk
5. Body Paragraph 4: mental health care of transgender people in the US is at risk
6. Body Paragraph 5: the overall well-being of transgender people in the US is at risk
7. Concluding paragraph

For this argument to be effective, the audience would have to generally agree with the *underlying premises*:

- Trans people exist and are valid
- Trans people deserve physical and mental health care
- Trans people deserve overall well-being

None of the arguments listed above will be argued in the essay, as the thesis statement suggests.

Thesis statement checklist

Ensure your thesis statement

- ü states my topic.
- ü is debatable.
- ü states a fact-based opinion or provides an angle/perspective on my topic.
- ü responds to/answers the prompt
- ü lets the reader know the main idea of the essay.
- ü is specific but not so specific that I cannot develop it well for the length requirements of my assignment.

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6.2: Argumentation--Activity

4.2 Class Activity

Read the thesis statements below and then

- a) identify the conclusion in each
- b) identify any premises in each
- c) decide if each statement is argumentative.
- d) Write a sentence or two explaining your answer to (c)
- e) Discuss your answers with your classmates—if there's disagreement, ask for further explanations, and offer your explanation. Be open to being incorrect!

Thesis Statements

1. The United States has been a major world power since World War I; therefore, the US's War Crime and Genocide policies and deployment of those policies wield significant, global influence.
2. Long COVID presents a significant threat to public health and the relative current lack of scientific research and treatments is due to sexism, racism, and ableism.
3. Books bans have increased throughout the US since 2020, causing some school libraries and classroom teachers extra work as they inventory their books and remove the texts that are banned.

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6.3: Argumentation-- Assignment

4.3 Assignment

Reread the Example Essay and assess the argument made in the essay. Answer the following questions,

1. How do you know the thesis is argumentative?
2. What are the stated premise(s) of the argument?
3. What unstated premises are present in this argument?
4. What is the conclusion of the argument?
5. Consider the evidence the writer uses to support their argument. Is the evidence sufficient and well used? Why or why not?
6. Does the writer provide enough context to support their argument?
7. In your summative assessment, is the essay effective at arguing it's thesis statement?

Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today

Most everyone at some point in their lives will become disabled. This is a truth we often do not want to consider because it makes us feel scared and vulnerable. However, that fear and vulnerability is something that millions of Americans, of all ages, face every day with little or no emotional, social, or financial support. “Disability” is an umbrella term that can refer to physical, mental, or intellectual impairments, or combinations of them, that make engaging in certain activities or the world in general more difficult or even impossible. Disability occurs because of genetics, environmental factors, disease, injuries, and traumas. While they can technically be short term—for example, a broken arm—disabilities are most commonly understood as long term and even lifelong. Examples of disabilities range from being blind, to autism, to having an amputation, to ADHD. US society has improved in its treatment of disabled people, particularly since the inception for the disability rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the resulting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our understanding of what disability is has broadened and become more widespread: we regularly see disabled people in films and in daily life. However, there is still much work to be done to fully include and support disabled people. [In the United States today, there is inadequate media portrayals, social acceptance, and financial support and opportunities of disabled individuals which maintains their marginalization.](#)

[The media depicts disabled people in harmful ways by portraying them as childish or as jokes, if they choose to depict disabled people at all. While media portrayal of disabled folks has improved, today we still see negative stereotypes and underrepresentation.](#) The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants’ lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article “[Exploitation for Acceptance,](#)” author Maree Wolf states “while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic’s pursuit of community and connection. The participant’s lives aren’t treated as real or serious—they are treated as jokes or ‘aww, cute!’ moments.” LotS’s cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people. No person’s humanity should be reduced to a joke or gimmick. Often, when an autistic participant is going about their normal activities in the best way they can in LotS, background music meant to indicate silliness or youthfulness will play (Wolf). This signals to the audience that the autistic individuals they see on their screens are similarly silly or infantile, even when they are being serious. The show conveys the message that autistic people are funny and indeed of protection, but also very different than “normal people.” The presumably non-autistic viewer can feel good that they are viewing autistic people positively and in need of protection, rather than as stupid or unimportant. Most troubling is that LotS is a very popular, well rated show (Wolf) and many disabled folks do defend it because of the representation it offers. However, it stands out as just one example of how the current popular media harmfully depicts disabled people.

[Social acceptance of disabled people has also improved in the past several decades, but it is also insufficient and problematic for disabled people’s overall well-being.](#) Acceptance entails more than tolerating or providing bare-minimum support: social acceptance looks like full inclusion and advocacy; it looks like reframing what is “normal” and meeting people where they’re at. However, social acceptance is in short supply for too many disabled people. In “Uninspired: The Reality of Living with Disability,”

by Tavia Sousanis, the lives of “high achieving” disabled people are explored. When Adriana, a 28-year-old civil engineer who is unable to use her legs, got engaged to her long-time boyfriend, she was met with hostility rather than joy. [Author Tavia Sousanis](#) reports Adriana’s experience: “I could tell his friends, who I know liked me, were like, *are you really going to marry the paraplegic girl?*” Adriana laughed, but her eyes filled with tears. She continued ‘And his mom—I love her, we’re good now—but she cried when he said he proposed to me because she thought my disability meant she wouldn’t have grandchildren...that’s not even true.’” Adriana’s story shows that despite being accomplished and well-liked, she was reduced to her disability status and deemed undesirable. The results for her were heart-breaking. Several others in Sousanis’s article describe similar situations wherein they are regarded as “courageous,” “awesome,” and “truly inspiring” by those around them because of their disabilities, but when it came to being hired for a good job or being accepted into a new friend or family group, they are often painfully excluded. Maree Wolf also maintains that disabled people are understood as useful when they provoke sympathy or even gratitude in the able-bodied but are disregarded when they need accommodations or true acceptance (“Exploitation for Acceptance”). All humans need some measure of social acceptance to not only fulfill the innate emotional need for connection and kinship, but also to help ensure their physical and medical needs are met. The lack of social acceptance that many disabled people face poses a serious and unacceptable threat to their well-being.

[For disabled individuals who are at all able to work, employment is a significant struggle, wages and benefits are low, and thus their needs are often unmet.](#) In “Disabled Workers Saw Record Employment Gains in 2023, But Gaps Remain,” by Kennedy [Andara et al.](#), it’s reported that only 38.2 % of disabled, working age adult men were employed in 2023. This is actually a significant improvement, a record low, but it’s clear that this is a problem when compared to the 80% of employed able-bodied men in the same year (Andara et al). It should also be noted that these statistics describe any type of employment—full or part time. Andara et al. notes that “people with disabilities are almost twice as likely to work part time.” This means that actual earnings, access to employer-provided healthcare, and other necessary benefits like paid time off and, ironically, disability insurance may be far less available to disabled workers. Part-time jobs offer less money annually, even if the hourly rate is the same as full-time, and part-time jobs rarely offer paid time off or any other benefits. Further, according to [Andara et al.](#), “Black and Hispanic disabled people experienced higher unemployment rates in 2023—at 10.2 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively. The unemployment rates of these groups are consistently above the average for disabled workers, due to the additional hardships of intersecting and compounding racism and ableism.” Not only do disabled people of color experience ableism, and the systemic disadvantages of it, but they experience a compounded disadvantage due to racism. The painful irony is that many disabled people need healthcare and daily assistance that costs much more than the needs of the average, able-bodied people. The result for all disabled people in general is economic difficulty and poverty, and unmet needs.

In conclusion, despite some increases in visibility and legal protections for disabled people, their marginalization remains a serious issue in the US. When portrayed in media, disabled people are too often depicted as juvenile or as inspiration for non-disabled people, furthering harmful stereotypes and exclusion. While social acceptance has improved, it’s still lacking and causes emotional harm and even physical neglect in disabled populations. Finally, disabled people’s access to acquire and maintain employment that offers a living wage and much needed benefits is very limited and results in increased economic hardships. Increasing and furthering the cause of disability rights is crucial not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because disability will—sooner or later—touch all of our lives.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

7: The Body of the Academic Essay

7.1: Readings

7.2: Activity

7.3: Assignment

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7.1: Readings

8.1 Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs constitute most of the essay. They are also where you'll do the most work. Within an essay, body paragraphs allow a writer to expand on ideas and provide audiences with support for a chosen topic or argument—essentially, to prove their argument. In each body paragraph, you must include a topic sentence, evidence, explanation of the evidence and/or a discussion of the significance of the evidence, and a transition/conclusion.

Outline of Body Paragraph

I. Body Paragraph

- a. Topic sentence
- b. Additional information on the topic
- c. Introduction and presentation of evidence 1:
 - i. Explanation and interpretation of evidence 1 and/or a discussion of the significance of the evidence 1
- d. Transition
- e. Introduction and presentation of evidence 2:
 - i. Explanation and interpretation of evidence 2 and/or a discussion of the significance of the evidence 2
- Continue with transitions and evidence presentation and explanations until complete.
- f. Transition/conclusion

Body Paragraph Components

Topic sentences

Topic sentences should encapsulate the idea of your body paragraph, while being general and clearly relating to your thesis statement. In many cases, the topic sentences for a given paragraph will mirror a part of the thesis. This means for our purposes, topic sentences will be argumentative, as your thesis statements for all your essays in the class will be argumentative.

Think of topic sentences as the thesis statements of their respective paragraphs. If its helpful to think of such things in terms of familiar employment hierarchies, thesis statements are the big bosses of essays—what they say goes, and nothing should occur that they don't prescribe. Topic sentences are then the middle managers—they do the bidding of the thesis statement. They don't invent new topics, and the rest of the paragraph—think of them as the common worker—carry out the real work dictated by the thesis statement and their topic sentence.

Topic sentences should be the first sentence in the paragraph because it introduces to your audience what the paragraph will be about.

Evidence and Supporting Details

After the topic sentence, you should provide sentences that introduce your supporting evidence. Evidence should most often be from a reliable source—usually the sources your instructor has provided or have been approved by your instructor. This can be a quote, a paraphrase, or even a short summary of the source, but it must always be cited. Be sure to properly integrate your sources into your essay. Evidence may include an example drawn from first-hand observation or personal experience but be very careful with this: be sure your personal example is appropriate, logical, and actually strengthens your argument.

Explanation of Evidence and Explanation of significance

In the sentences after your quote/paraphrase/example, clarify the information you provided in a concise manner. You should also provide the necessary details to develop your example as evidence. Sometimes, this means reiterating the quote in different, more accessible language so that it's easier to understand. However, you should only do this if you believe your audience needs the evidence explained differently. If your quote's or paraphrase's meaning is clear, you do not need reiterate it.

Consider the following example:

Arnold Jones states, “75% of college students report not getting enough sleep; this in turn leads to brain fog and low energy that impacts their academic performance and quality of life.” This shows that students say they don’t get enough sleep and their grades and lives suffer because of it.

While the second sentence is an accurate summary of the quote, it’s unnecessary because the quote itself was clear. The second sentence has the same meaning as the quote itself, so it contributes nothing.

It would, however, be beneficial to write a sentence after the quote that shows the significance of the quote and interprets—rather than restates—the evidence. In demonstrating the significance of the quote, you will have to showcase your logical skills and your understanding of the topic. For example,

Arnold Jones states, “75% of college students report not getting enough sleep; this in turn leads to brain fog and low energy that impacts their academic performance and quality of life.” This means the vast majority of college students are seriously struggling with poor sleep and the detrimental effects of sleep deprivation, which has become an epidemic in colleges and universities.

This second sentence explanation offers interpretation of the quote and adds some information while furthering the discussion.

Transition and/or conclusion

To draw the discussion and interpretation of evidence to a close, use the evidence and explanations to reach a conclusion: a new understanding of the thesis that mirrors your topic sentence. If possible, craft the conclusion so that it sets the reader up to transition to the next paragraph.

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7.2: Activity

8.2 Activity

Read the thesis statement and body paragraph below. Then answer the following questions briefly in your notes. Then discuss with a small group or the class.

1. Write or copy/paste the topic sentence.
2. Does the topic sentence relate to the thesis in the prescribed ways?
3. What is your assessment of the quality of the topic sentence, give the guidelines above?
4. Does the writer include all necessary components of a body paragraph?
5. Given the guidance above, what does the writer do well in the body paragraph?
6. What do they need to improve? What would you omit or change? What advice would you give them if you were their peer reviewer?

Text

Student thesis statement

(relevant section highlighted): Ensuring transgender youth have unfettered access to gender affirming care is a fundamental human rights issue underscored by extensive research demonstrating the benefits of gender-affirming care on their well-being, the danger of legal obstructions impeding their access to life saving care, and the ethical obligation of medical professionals to ensure young trans patients have access to such care.

Student body paragraph

The recent and historical legal discrimination has profoundly detrimental effects on the well-being of transgender youth, perpetuating stigma, limiting access to affirming healthcare, and fostering an environment of social exclusion. Transgender youth face numerous legal obstacles affecting their access to gender-affirming care. In 2023, thirty-three states proposed legislation that targeted transgender healthcare access, primarily targeting transgender children (Scheim et al.). By March 2023 several states including Georgia, Tennessee, and Iowa signed bills that banned gender-affirming treatments and increased penalties for practitioners that aid youth in receiving transgender health care (Redfield et al.). As of November 2023, 19 states are considering bills that would restrict or ban gender-affirming care for transgender youth and in 13 states, proposed bills would additionally criminalize medical providers for providing care to transgender youth (Redfield et al.). This means that several states are considering or proposing devastatingly harmful bills. As a result of introducing legislation that is increasingly punitive to doctors administering gender-affirming care, there is less access to providers who are willing or able to treat gender dysphoria in children and adolescents. Six of these states are also proposing bills in 2023 that would classify providing transgender-related healthcare to minors as child abuse. Though we live in Illinois, my little brother is transgender, and he faced numerous challenges as a minor seeking gender affirming care. These challenges have caused him depression and anxiety. Escalating laws targeting trans youth also increase social bias, discouraging many families from accepting transgender youth in their homes and preventing parents from helping their children access treatment.

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7.3: Assignment

8.3 Assignment: Backwards Outlining

Using either a complete body paragraph from a draft you are working on for this course, the body paragraph below from the Student Example Essay we've been using, copy and paste the parts of the body paragraph to their corresponding component listed below to create an outline the body paragraph. Then, critique it:

1. What's missing?
2. What doesn't fit?
3. Does this paragraph meet all the noted requirements?

Student Essay Body Paragraph Example

Thesis statement

In the United States today, there is inadequate media portrayals, social acceptance, and financial support and opportunities of disabled individuals which maintains their marginalization.

Body Paragraph

The media depicts disabled people in harmful ways by portraying them as childish or as jokes, if they choose to depict disabled people at all. While media portrayal of disabled folks has improved, today we still see negative stereotypes and underrepresentation. The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants' lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article "[Exploitation for Acceptance](#)," author Maree Wolf states "while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic's pursuit of community and connection. The participant's lives aren't treated is real or serious—they are treated as jokes or 'aww, cute!' moments." LotS's cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people. No person's humanity should be reduced to a joke or gimmick. Often, when an autistic participant is going about their normal activities in the best way they can in LotS, background music meant to indicate silliness or youthfulness will play (Wolf). This signals to the audience that the autistic individuals they see on their screens are similarly silly or infantile, even when they are being serious. The show conveys the message that autistic people are funny and indeed of protection, but also very different than "normal people." The presumably non-autistic viewer can feel good that they are viewing autistic people positively and in need of protection, rather than as stupid or unimportant. Most troubling is that LotS is a

very popular, well rated show (Wolf) and many disabled folks do defend it because of the representation it offers. However, it stands out as just one example of how the current popular media harmfully depicts disabled people.

Topic sentence	
Additional information on the topic	
Introduction and presentation of evidence 1:	
Explanation and interpretation of evidence 1 and/or a discussion of the significance of the evidence 1	
Transition	
Introduction and presentation of evidence 2:	
Explanation and interpretation of evidence 2 and/or a discussion of the significance of the evidence 2	
Transition/conclusion	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: MLA Citations and Source Integration

8.1: Readings

8.2: Activity

8.3: Assignment

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8.1: Readings

10.1 MLA citations

Why do we cite?

- To **avoid plagiarism** (passing off others' ideas as your own) in any and all forms.
- To **increase our own ethos** as writers: showing that you know of, and are in conversation with, other credible sources boosts your own credibility and authority.
- To create an easy way for your readers or audience to **verify the facts** you present.

Why do we use MLA in this class?

It's a way to standardize the way you present your writing in academic settings. MLA is most commonly used in the humanities. As English is understood broadly as part of the Humanities, we use MLA.

MLA (Modern Language Association) is one of many ways to format documents and cite sources. Other common citation styles are APA (American Psychological Association), which is often used in the social sciences, and Chicago/Turabian style. All styles are suited to particular subject areas.

Each method provides 3 things:

- Standardization for **in-text citations** (for quotes, paraphrases, and summaries within the body of the essay).
- Standardization for **Works Cited/References**.
- Standardization for **formatting** the entire essay, i.e. where to put your name, the title, and the margin size.

Citations and how to do them

Citations are not the same as quotations. A citation is an standardized indication of the source of your ideas and/or words.

Citation is the broad category: *summaries*, *paraphrases*, and *quotations* all need citations, but none them themselves are citations.

- Example citation *summaries*:*
 - In their book about modern ecology movements in the face of the climate crisis, *Beyond the New Green Deal*, Hahn and Wright discuss the impact of global corporations on the worsening climate. They conclude that anti-capitalist grassroots movements may be the most effective tool available, given the poor outcomes of attempts to change environmental policy in the US.
- *Summaries generally do not need page number citations because they are summaries of the entire work, or large parts of it. A signal phrase is most often enough.
- Example citation *paraphrases*:
 - Hahn and Wright state that while a growing number of democratic political candidates promise to prioritize policy making to help climate change, only about 5% of them are able to do this once elected (112).
- Example citation *quotations*:
 - Hahn and Wright argue “the ineffective nature of policy making in Washington, by our elected officials, may be discouraging to grassroots activists who are just starting out, but it in can also be a rallying cry to organize and create change in local communities” (113).

All three of these would necessitate a **Works Cited entry**, like this:

Hahn, Jo and W. Wright. *Beyond the New Green Deal*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2018.

Never leave a quote alone

Never leave a quote alone in a sentence: use signal phrases or blend the quote into your own writing. Your own words should always introduce a quote or contextualize it.

- Incorporation into your own sentence:
 - While the statistics vary for men under the age of 50, there's “a clear indication that men 50 and older are two to three times more likely to report being lonely, regardless of relationship status” (Watts) that suggests finding a mate is not helpful.
- Introduce the quote:

- In the article “World on Fire,” the authors report on the panic caused by climate change: “60% of participants reported feeling severely heightened anxiety when consuming media about climate change.”
- Signal phrase:
 - Vaughn argues, “policy makers are not taking their commitment to citizens seriously. Instead, they are motivated by the interests of big business and the kickbacks and other financial and social benefit they provide.”

Quote/Paraphrase Sandwich

A quote/paraphrase sandwich is an analogy to help you remember how to treat quotes and paraphrases in your essays. As noted, quotes should never be left alone in a sentence. Quotes/paraphrases must always be introduced (conceptually and literally), presented, and then explained or connected to the topic sentence.

Top Bun	Conceptually introduce the quote, and literally introduce the quote. Include some introductory information needed to understand the quote, as well as the source, if desired.
Meat or delectable veggie filling	Present the quote or paraphrase.
Bottom Bun	Explain the quote if needed (if the language is complex, or the data otherwise needs to be broken down) and explain how the quote/paraphrase connects to the topic sentence in the paragraph in which the quote/paraphrase exists.

Example

The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants’ lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article “Exploitation for Acceptance,” author Maree Wolf states “while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic’s pursuit of community and connection. The participant’s lives aren’t treated as real or serious—they are treated as jokes or ‘aww, cute!’ moments.” LotS’s cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people.

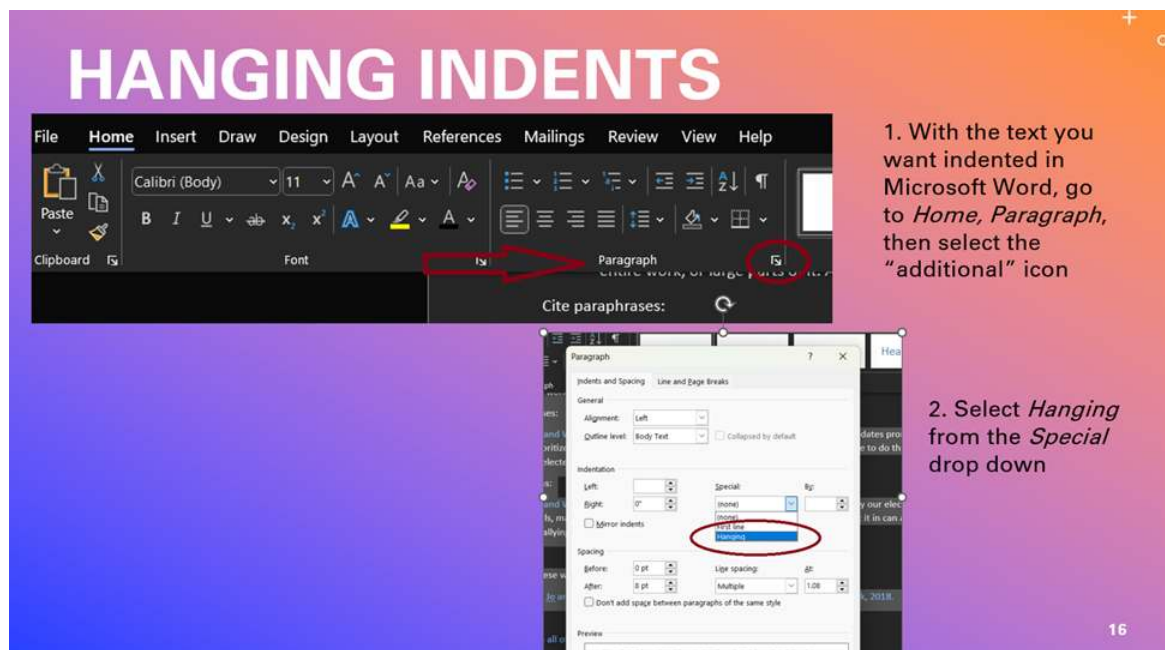
Hanging Indents

Your Works Cited must have “hanging indents.”

They look like this:

	Works Cited
	Blecker, Robert. “If Not the Parkland Shooter, Who Is the Death Penalty For?” <i>New York Times</i> , 29 Oct. 2022, p. A22(L). <i>Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints</i> , link.gale.com/apps/doc/A724391987/OVIC?u=chic13716&sid=bookmark-OVIC&xid=a8147eda.

Here’s how to do them in Microsoft Word.



MLA citation and Works Cited Checklist

The answer to all of these questions should be YES!

In-text citations:

- If I used my own words to explain a source's ideas, is it clear exactly where those ideas come from? Do I use **signal phrases** and/or **parenthetical citations**?
- If I used the source's exact words, is it in **quotation marks**?
- If I used more than 4 lines of a source's exact words, is it presented properly in a **block quote**?
- Do I introduce each quote/paraphrase/summary, and then immediately discuss/explain/elaborate and connect it to the rest of the paragraph?
- Does every cited source have a **Works Cited** entry?

On the Works Cited page:

- Does the Works Cited start on its own page?
- Is the title Works Cited in bold and centered at the top of the page?
- Are the entries arranged in alphabetical order?
- Did I use **hanging indents**?
- Did I verify the formatting and content of each entry, using Purdue OWL, even if the entry was automatically generated by a database?
- Is every Works Cited entry cited at least once in the essay in an in-text citation (quote, summary, paraphrase with signal phrase and/or parenthetical citation)?

MLA Resources

Full Information on how to properly use MLA for all 3 elements: in-text citations, works cited, and formatting from Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL).

MLA In-Text Citations: The Basics

MLA Formatting and Style Guide

MLA Works Cited Page: Basic Format

Responsible use of sources: accuracy, fairness, and clear attribution

To properly use a source, you must do the following:

- Comprehend the source. It is crucial for you to completely understand your source--thoroughly read and understand the source. If you need help with this step, see a reading tutor.
- Be accurate. If you understand your source, you should be able to accurately represent the source author's ideas and data.
- Be fair. Honestly represent what the source says, even if it does not help your argument. Typically, we use sources that agree with our arguments, so we default to being fair, i.e., using the author's work in the way they intended and honestly representing it. However, sometimes we disagree with an author's conclusions OR we think they should have come to a somewhat different conclusion. We then can take their work and point out the issues, but we must be clear when we do this. It should never seem like you are changing or misrepresenting the author's ideas.
- Cite the source correctly whether you paraphrase, quote, or summarize. It should always be crystal clear when you are using the source's ideas rather than your own.
- Do not plagiarize. It must be very clear whose ideas are presented. If the ideas are not entirely your own, if the wording is not entirely your own, either do not use it or cite it properly.

Considering the source

Rhetorically analyze your potential sources:

- What is their ethos? What are their credentials, and what is their motivation/intention?
- A source being peer reviewed automatically lends ethos and high credibility because the source: 1. Must be an expert to be peer reviewed, and 2. Those peers who review it are also experts. Therefore, the output's reliability is verified.
- Who is their intended audience? If it's not you, consider either not using the source, or, if appropriate, offering contextualization when you cite them. Say "In a report intended for medical students, the author suggests...."
- Reliable academic sources will rarely use pathos; they will use logos in abundance. They will also strengthen their own ethos by citing the work of other reliable, well-respected sources.

Plagiarism

There are many forms of plagiarism, but it can be summarized as presenting another's work as your own. This applies to a single sentence or phrase, or an entire essay.

It can be intentional or unintentional. Intentional is far more serious and carries heavier penalties, but both will result in lost points, at minimum.

Intentional – In this class, automatic failure of the assignment, possible other disciplinary actions and/or failure of the course.

- Your friend took this class last year. You submit a part of one of his essays as though you wrote it.
- You buy an essay.
- You copy/paste a paragraph from a news article, modify it somewhat, do not cite it, and then include it your essay.
- A work colleague heavily edits your essay and changes the phrasing, word choice, and organization of your essay. They may have also added a topic sentence here and there.
- You used an AI chat to write your essay, in part or in whole.

Unintentional—In this class, results in a point reduction only if it is clearly unintentional. May incur more serious penalties.

- You paraphrased one of your sources and forgot to cite it.
- You briefly summarized an article but forgot to mention where it came from or who wrote it.
- You provided a quote but forgot to put it in quotation marks and cite the source.

How to avoid plagiarism:

Intentional:

If you're feeling stuck and/or overwhelmed, ask for help from the correct sources that will actually help you learn:

- A writing tutor.

- A reading tutor.
- A librarian.
- Your professor.
- If you need other support, seek it out!
- For disability accommodations, see the Access Center.
- For mental health issues, see the Wellness Center.

Here and in life in general, advocating for yourself and asking for what you need is crucial.

- Plan ahead and anticipate your challenges. Life is busy and complicated, and no one succeeds completely on their own. Make a plan to complete your assignments and make appointments for help.
- Ask for an extension. While extensions can set you back, it's far better to ask for an extension than to plagiarize.
- Accept that you may not get the grade you want, or you might even fail. No one wants to fall short of their own expectations or others'; however, even an F is preferable to plagiarism being noted on your official academic record.

Unintentional

- Give yourself enough time to revise and thoroughly edit.
- Carefully edit and re-read your essay. Try highlighting all the content that is not yours for a clear visual indicator (remove the highlight before submitting!). You can also color code.
- Keep track of your research in your research log.
- Keep track of the sources you use with an in-progress works cited page.
- Have a writing tutor review your final draft for correct citations. Note, there's no guarantee that a tutor will spot unintentional plagiarism.

Patchwriting

Patchwriting happens when you rephrase a portion of source material, but your language remains too close to the vocabulary and/or sentence structure of the original text. All patchwriting is a kind of paraphrase, but successful paraphrase is not patchwritten.

Why is it something to be avoided?

- Patchwriting does not demonstrate the writer's comprehension. Often, we patchwrite when we do not fully understand the source content..
- It is typically not well-written. Pasting together synonyms is usually a recipe for an awkward, unwieldy sentence. Sometimes, it's incomprehensible.
- It can lead to plagiarism. If you are not truly using your own words, and not using a quote, it's technically plagiarism.

Patch Writing Example

Original text

"The Goose diet, commonly known as "honking" on social media, is a growing trend in which teens and adults eat nothing but grass clippings in an effort to lose weight and, reportedly get "goose juiced"—meaning they take on the fearless of aggression of a nesting Canadian goose" (Gosling).

Patchwriting (ineffective, plagiaristic paraphrase)

The Goose diet, also known as "honking" on Tiktok, Twitter(X) and the like, is a growing trend in which people over the age of twelve eat only clippings of grass in an effort to shrink their waistlines, and allegedly get "goose juiced"—which means they assume the lack of fear and the anger of a Canadian goose who is in its nesting season.

Actual paraphrase

According to Gosling, the Goose Diet phenomenon has been gaining popularity among both teenagers and adults, and even has a nickname on social media: "Honking." The diet is simple—it consists of eating grass clippings exclusively—and, allegedly, the result is rapid, significant weight loss as well as an empowering behavioral change in which dieters feel they have the invincible assertiveness of nesting Canadian geese (Gosling).

To quote or not to quote: determining whether you should paraphrase/summarize, or quote.

- Does the potential quote contain NECESSARY specific or technical phrasing (even jargon) that cannot be duplicated?
- Is it beautifully or poetically stated? Pithy or witty?
- Does it contain statistics, numbers, or figures that you would have to present “as is” anyhow?
- Is the quote an important personal narrative that needs to have the author’s voice presented, rather than your own?

.... Then you should quote it!

- Is the potential quote very long?
- Would you need to leave things out using an ellipsis (...) because not all of it is relevant?
- Is the quote an explanation or background information?
- Is it confusingly written? Complicated?
- Is it a key point or concept that you need to show you understand completely?

.... Then you should NOT quote it!

Paraphrase or summarize instead.

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8.2: Activity

Responsible Use Activity of Sources

Below are excerpts from a research essay that uses the source “On Life Support: Public Health in the Age of Mass Incarceration.” Carefully read each item below. Do not read the whole source report, but do read the areas cited below <https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/on-life-support-public-health-mass-incarceration-report.pdf>. Simply locate the information cited below in the source above and, for each item, determine: A) if the writer used the report fairly and accurately? B) if they did not, how is it inaccurate and/or unfair? C) if it could be improved, how would you recommend improving it?

Note: all citation formatting is correct.

1. As of 2014, individuals with infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and a variety of STDs, are more likely to end up incarcerated than individuals without such conditions (Cloud 6, 10).
2. According to Cloud’s 2014 report, being incarcerated causes “higher rates of chronic conditions and mental and physical disabilities” for people 55 years and older (7). Clearly, prison literally makes people sick, especially those of certain age demographics.
3. Poor health is not only a problem for incarcerated individuals—it’s a problem for their communities: each year, “prisons release nearly 700,000 people to the community... for people with a history of injection drug use, failure to promote care continuity upon release increases risk of relapse, overdose, and risky behaviors that spread HIV/AIDs and HCV disease in communities” (Cloud 15).
4. What’s arguably worse is that the punishment for incarcerated individuals does not end after their prison sentence: their punishment continues in being blocked from vital resources. Cloud reports, “Policies such as banning people with a drug felony conviction from receiving cash welfare, food stamps, and subsidized housing lead to housing instability” (18). While some may say that this outcome is part of the individual’s “consequence” of having engaged in crime, it is crucial to note that because of such policies, children who have an incarcerated father are far more likely to experience homelessness in their childhoods (Cloud 18). There’s no justice in punishing innocent children for “the sins” of their fathers; children, families, and other community members should not suffer continually because of an individual’s alleged crimes.

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8.3: Assignment

Assignment

Use the information below to craft a proper MLA Works Cited page for the essay *Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today*. Note, items 2 and 3 have all the needed info, but for item 1, you will have to use the link to explore the source and find the correct information.

Also, answer the following questions

- Are all used sources cited?
- Are the in-text citations in the essay done correctly?

Source Information

1. “Disabled Workers Saw Record Employment Gains in 2023, But Gaps Remain.”
<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/disabled-workers-saw-record-employment-gains-in-2023-but-gaps-remain/#:~:text=Feb%2022%2C%202024-,Disabled%20Workers%20Saw%20Record%20Employment%20Gains%20in%202023%2C%20But%20Gaps,more%20to%20close%20persistent%20gaps.>
2. Tavia Sousanis,. <https://accounts.theatlantic.com/pro...rce=google&utm.> “Uninspired: The Reality of Living with Disability.” *The Atlantic*, 14 May 2024.
3. Maree Wolf, “Exploitation for Acceptance.” <https://www.disabilityrightsnetwork....otarealarticle>. *Disability Rights Network*, 10 Oct. 2023.

Full text of essay

Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today

Most everyone at some point in their lives will become disabled. This is a truth we often do not want to consider because it makes us feel scared and vulnerable. However, that fear and vulnerability is something that millions of Americans, of all ages, face every day with little or no emotional, social, or financial support. “Disability” is an umbrella term that can refer to physical, mental, or intellectual impairments, or combinations of them, that make engaging in certain activities or the world in general more difficult or even impossible. Disability occurs because of genetics, environmental factors, disease, injuries, and traumas. While they can technically be short term—for example, a broken arm—disabilities are most commonly understood as long term and even lifelong. Examples of disabilities range from being blind, to autism, to having an amputation, to ADHD. US society has improved in its treatment of disabled people, particularly since the inception for the disability rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the resulting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our understanding of what disability is has broadened and become more widespread: we regularly see disabled people in films and in daily life. However, there is still much work to be done to fully include and support disabled people. In the United States today, there is inadequate media portrayals, social acceptance, and financial support and opportunities of disabled individuals which maintains their marginalization.

The media depicts disabled people in harmful ways by portraying them as childish or as jokes, if they choose to depict disabled people at all. While media portrayal of disabled folks has improved, today we still see negative stereotypes and underrepresentation. The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants’ lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article “Exploitation for Acceptance,” author Maree Wolf states “while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic’s pursuit of community and connection. The participant’s lives aren’t treated as real or serious—they are treated as jokes or ‘aww, cute!’ moments.” LotS’s cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people. No person’s humanity should be reduced to a joke or gimmick. Often, when an autistic participant is going about their normal activities in the best way they can in LotS, background music meant to indicate silliness or youthfulness will play (Wolf). This signals to the audience that the autistic individuals they see on their screens are similarly silly or infantile, even when they are being serious. The show conveys the message that autistic people are funny and

indeed of protection, but also very different than “normal people.” The presumably non-autistic viewer can feel good that they are viewing autistic people positively and in need of protection, rather than as stupid or unimportant. Most troubling is that *LotS* is a very popular, well rated show (Wolf) and many disabled folks do defend it because of the representation it offers. However, it stands out as just one example of how the current popular media harmfully depicts disabled people.

Social acceptance of disabled people has also improved in the past several decades, but it is also insufficient and problematic for disabled people’s overall well-being. Acceptance entails more than tolerating or providing bare-minimum support: social acceptance looks like full inclusion and advocacy; it looks like reframing what is “normal” and meeting people where they’re at. However, social acceptance is in short supply for too many disabled people. In “Uninspired: The Reality of Living with Disability,” by Tavia Sousanis, the lives of “high achieving” disabled people are explored. When Adriana, a 28-year-old civil engineer who is unable to use her legs, got engaged to her long-time boyfriend, she was met with hostility rather than joy. Author Tavia Sousanis reports Adriana’s experience: “I could tell his friends, who I know liked me, were like, *are you really going to marry the paraplegic girl?*” Adriana laughed, but her eyes filled with tears. She continued ‘And his mom—I love her, we’re good now—but she cried when he said he proposed to me because she thought my disability meant she wouldn’t have grandchildren...that’s not even true.’” Adriana’s story shows that despite being accomplished and well-liked, she was reduced to her disability status and deemed undesirable. The results for her were heart-breaking. Several others in Sousanis’s article describe similar situations wherein they are regarded as “courageous,” “awesome,” and “truly inspiring” by those around them because of their disabilities, but when it came to being hired for a good job or being accepted into a new friend or family group, they are often painfully excluded. Maree Wolf also maintains that disabled people are understood as useful when they provoke sympathy or even gratitude in the able-bodied but are disregarded when they need accommodations or true acceptance (“Exploitation for Acceptance”). All humans need some measure of social acceptance to not only fulfill the innate emotional need for connection and kinship, but also to help ensure their physical and medical needs are met. The lack of social acceptance that many disabled people face poses a serious and unacceptable threat to their well-being.

For disabled individuals who are at all able to work, employment is a significant struggle, wages and benefits are low, and thus their needs are often unmet. In “Disabled Workers Saw Record Employment Gains in 2023, But Gaps Remain,” by Kennedy Andara et al., it’s reported that only 38.2 % of disabled, working age adult men were employed in 2023. This is actually a significant improvement, a record low, but it’s clear that this is a problem when compared to the 80% of employed able-bodied men in the same year (Andara et al). It should also be noted that these statistics describe any type of employment—full or part time. Andara et al. notes that “people with disabilities are almost twice as likely to work part time.” This means that actual earnings, access to employer-provided healthcare, and other necessary benefits like paid time off and, ironically, disability insurance may be far less available to disabled workers. Part-time jobs offer less money annually, even if the hourly rate is the same as full-time, and part-time jobs rarely offer paid time off or any other benefits. Further, according to Andara et al., “Black and Hispanic disabled people experienced higher unemployment rates in 2023—at 10.2 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively. The unemployment rates of these groups are consistently above the average for disabled workers, due to the additional hardships of intersecting and compounding racism and ableism.” Not only do disabled people of color experience ableism, and the systemic disadvantages of it, but they experience a compounded disadvantage due to racism. The painful irony is that many disabled people need healthcare and daily assistance that costs much more than the needs of the average, able-bodied people. The result for all disabled people in general is economic difficulty and poverty, and unmet needs.

In conclusion, despite some increases in visibility and legal protections for disabled people, their marginalization remains a serious issue in the US. When portrayed in media, disabled people are too often depicted as juvenile or as inspiration for non-disabled people, furthering harmful stereotypes and exclusion. While social acceptance has improved, it’s still lacking and causes emotional harm and even physical neglect in disabled populations. Finally, disabled people’s access to acquire and maintain employment that offers a living wage and much needed benefits is very limited and results in increased economic hardships. Increasing and furthering the cause of disability rights is crucial not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because disability will—sooner or later—touch all of our lives.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

9: Argumentative Comparison and Contrast Essays [Sojourner Truth]

[9.1: Readings](#)

[9.2: Activity](#)

[9.3: Assignment](#)

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9.1: Readings

Comparison and Contrast

When deciding between multiple items or courses of action, we often naturally employ comparison and contrast techniques. Consider how you made your way to this course: did you decide between not going to college and going to college? Once you made that decision, did you then choose between a few different institutions? Hopefully, you had the support and resources to 1) fully understand each option, 2) carefully consider the implications and consequences of each option, and 3) compare and contrast each option against or with the other. While this example is obviously an informal version of comparison contrast inquiries, it more or less follows the same formula.

Typically, when we talk about “comparing” two or more things, we are talking about noting the ways in which the things are similar and how they are different. For this assignment, we are going back to the Latin root word *comparatio* and understanding the act of comparing to mean exclusively looking at the ways in which things or concepts are similar. “Contrast” here maintains its usual meaning of showing how two or more things or ideas are different.

Our goal for this assignment is to critically analyze two different texts—fully understand each text and their contexts/implications/consequences— and then compare and contrast them. From this process, you will develop an argumentative thesis based on your comparison contrast findings. Your thorough understanding of the texts and your critical thinking skills are vital components of beginning this process.

What’s the point?

The act of comparing and contrasting are crucial entry points into the process of detailed analysis of a subject. In comparing and contrasting two or more things/ideas, we must thoroughly understand, analyze, and critique each item itself, and then we must critically evaluate how they relate to each other and express those differences and similarities.

Texts and Context

“Ain’t I a Woman” Context

On May 29, 1851, Sojourner Truth delivered a speech at the Woman’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio. Truth, a black woman, was an emancipated slave born as Isabella Baumfree in 1797 in New York state. In her mid-thirties, she was promised freedom by her master; when he failed to free her, she fled and created a new life for herself as a preacher and activist (“Sojourner Truth: Ain’t I A Woman?” <https://www.nps.gov/articles/sojourner-truth.htm>).

The speech Truth gave on that day in 1851, and its derivatives, would later be titled “Ain’t I A Woman?” This rhetorical question was not original to Truth: “Am I not a Man and Brother?”, and later, “Am I Not a Woman and a Sister?” has been used since the late 18th century by anti-slavery abolitionists in the United Kingdom. These rhetorical questions were used to positively assert the humanity of blacks living under slavery.

The white male American abolitionist Marius Robinson attended the Woman’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851. As an activist, he had worked with Truth, and he published his own transcription of Truth’s speech with his commentary a month later in the abolitionist newspaper he edited, *The Anti-Slavery Bugle*, on June 21, 1851. That text is reproduced here as **“Ain’t I a Woman” (1851 Robinson Version)**.

Frances Dana Barker Gage, a white woman and fervent feminist, abolitionist, and temperance movement leader, presided over the Woman’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio in 1851: her opening speech for that event introduced Sojourner Truth to the audience. In 1863, some 12 years after the event, Gage published her version of Sojourner Truth’s 1851 speech, reproduced here as **“Ain’t I a Woman” (1863 Gage Version)**. Brezina, Corona (2004). Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I a woman?” speech: a primary source investigation. The Rosen Publishing Group. p. 32. ISBN 978-1-4042-0154-5.

Gage’s version differs significantly from Robinson’s. Perhaps most notably, Gage’s version of Truth’s speech is rendered in a caricature of the speech of Southern slaves. Truth would not have spoken in that dialect: her first language was Dutch, and she was raised in the North. Still, Gage’s version became the standard version of Truth’s 1851 speech.

Pre-reading Critical thinking questions

1. Why was the speech published at all?
2. Why were multiple versions of Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech written and published?
3. Why did one version, Gage's, become the standard?
4. What motivated Gage to publish her version? What motivated Robinson?
5. Why didn't Sojourner Truth write and publish her own speech?

"Ain't I a Woman" (1851 Robinson Version)

One of the most unique and interesting speeches of the convention was made by Sojourner Truth, an emancipated slave. It is impossible to transfer it to paper, or convey any adequate idea of the effect it produced upon the audience. Those only can appreciate it who saw her powerful form, her whole-souled, earnest gesture, and listened to her strong and truthful tones. She came forward to the platform and addressing the President said with great simplicity: "May I say a few words?" Receiving an affirmative answer, she proceeded:

I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal. I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am as strong as any man that is now. As for intellect, all I can say is, if a woman have a pint, and a man a quart – why can't she have her little pint full?

You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much, – for we can't take more than our pint'll hold. The poor men seems to be all in confusion, and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights, give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they won't be so much trouble.

I can't read, but I can hear. I have heard the Bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well, if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again. The Lady has spoken about Jesus, how he never spurned woman from him, and she was right. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to him with faith and love and besought him to raise their brother. And Jesus wept and Lazarus came forth. And how came Jesus into the world? Through God who created him and the woman who bore him. Man, where was your part? But the women are coming up blessed be God and a few of the men are coming up with them. But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard.

Robinson, Marius. *Anti-Slavery Bugle*. (New-Lisbon, Ohio), 21 June 1851. *Chronicling*

America: Historic American Newspapers. Lib. of Congress.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/l...21/ed-1/seq-4/>

"Ain't I a Woman" (1863 Gage Version)

*****Content Warning: This version of Sojourner Truth's speech and Gage's introduction contain multiple uses of anti-black slurs.*****

In *A History of Woman Suffrage*, Gage describes the situation before Truth gave her speech:

The leaders of the movement trembled on seeing a tall, gaunt black woman in a gray dress and white turban, surmounted with an uncouth sunbonnet, march deliberately into the church, walk with the air of a queen up the aisle, and take her seat upon the pulpit steps. A buzz of disapprobation was heard all over the house, and there fell on the listening ear, 'An abolition affair!' "Woman's rights and niggers!" "I told you so!" "Go it, darkey!" . . . Again and again, timorous and trembling ones came to me and said, with earnestness, "Don't let her speak, Mrs. Gage, it will ruin us. Every newspaper in the land will have our cause mixed up with abolition and niggers, and we shall be utterly denounced." My only answer was, "We shall see when the time comes."

...

There were very few women in those days who dared to "speak in meeting"; and the august teachers of the people were seemingly getting the better of us, while the boys in the galleries, and the sneerers among the pews, were hugely enjoying the discomfiture as they supposed, of the "strong-minded." Some of the tender-skinned friends were on the point of losing dignity, and the atmosphere betokened a storm. When, slowly from her seat in the corner rose Sojourner Truth, who, till now, had scarcely lifted her head. "Don't let her speak!" gasped half a dozen in my ear. She moved slowly and solemnly to the front, laid her old bonnet at her feet,

and turned her great speaking eyes to me. There was a hissing sound of disapprobation above and below. I rose and announced, "Sojourner Truth," and begged the audience to keep silence for a few moments.

The tumult subsided at once, and every eye was fixed on this almost Amazon form, which stood nearly six feet high, head erect, and eyes piercing the upper air like one in a dream. At her first word there was a profound hush. She spoke in deep tones, which, though not loud, reached every ear in the house, and away through the throng at the doors and windows.

Sojourner Truth's speech, as provided by Gage:

"Wall, chilern, whar dar is so much racket dar must be somethin' out o' kilter. I tink dat 'twixt de niggers of de Souf and de womin at de Norf, all talkin' 'bout rights, de white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all dis here talkin' 'bout?

"Dat man ober dar say dat womin needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted ober ditches, and to hab de best place everywhar. Nobody eber helps me into carriages, or ober mud-puddles, or gibs me any best place!" And raising herself to her full height, and her voice to a pitch like rolling thunder, she asked. "And a'n't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! (and she bared her right arm to the shoulder, showing her tremendous muscular power). I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And a'n't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man—when I could get it—and bear de lash as well! And a'n't, I a woman? I have borne thirteen chilern, and seen 'em mos' all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And a'n't I a woman?

"Den dey talks 'bout dis ting in de head; what dis dey call it?" ("Intellect," whispered someone near.) "Dat's it, honey. What's dat got to do wid womin's rights or nigger's rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yourn holds a quart, wouldn't ye be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full?" And she pointed her significant finger, and sent a keen glance at the minister who had made the argument. The cheering was long and loud.

"Den dat little man in black dar, he say women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wan't a woman! Whar did your Christ come from?" Rolling thunder couldn't have stilled that crowd, as did those deep, wonderful tones, as she stood there with outstretched arms and eyes of fire. Raising her voice still louder, she repeated, "Whar did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothin' to do wid Him." Oh, what a rebuke that was to that little man.

Turning again to another objector, she took up the defense of Mother Eve. I can not follow her through it all. It was pointed, and witty, and solemn; eliciting at almost every sentence deafening applause; and she ended by asserting: "If de fust woman God ever made was strong enough to turn de world upside down all alone, dese women togedder (and she glanced her eye over the platform) ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now dey is asking to do it, de men better let 'em." Long-continued cheering greeted this. "'Bleeged to ye for hearin' on me, and now ole Sojourner han't got nothin' more to say."

Gage goes on to describe the scene after the speech:

Amid roars of applause, she [Truth] returned to her corner, leaving more than one of us with streaming eyes, and hearts beating with gratitude. She had taken us up in her strong arms and carried us safely over the slough of difficulty turning the whole tide in our favor. I have never in my life seen anything like the magical influence that subdued the mobbish spirit of the day, and turned the sneers and jeers of an excited crowd into notes of respect and admiration. Hundreds rushed up to shake hands with her, and congratulate the glorious old mother, and bid her God-speed on her mission of 'testifyin' agin concerning the wickedness of this 'ere people.'

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9.2: Activity

Activity

Write down your answers to the following questions. Also, come up with one substantive question that you feel is important to comparing and contrasting these two texts. Then, in a class discussion facilitated by your instructor, discuss your answers to the questions below and present the question you came up with.

1. Though the two versions differ in length and language usage, both versions share a thesis. What is that thesis?
 2. In either, or both, versions, what are Truth's main supports for her thesis?
 3. Both versions also rely on similar evidence to support the shared thesis. What is the shared evidence?
 4. Identify some examples provided in both texts that the author(s) use to support the thesis.
-

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9.3: Assignment

Assignment

“Ain’t I a Woman?” Compare/Contrast Essay

Prompt: Compose an argumentative compare/contrast essay that discusses both published versions of Sojourner Truth’s 1851 “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech. In your essay, construct an argument about the two versions and, throughout your essay, prove that thesis by explaining to your reader how the texts are similar and/or different from each other in their argument, evidence, presentation, and language.

We often connotatively use the term “compare” to mean showing the similarities and/or differences between things. In the academic sense, though, a comparison shows how things are similar and a contrast shows how things are different. For our needs, you will be able to compare, contrast, or do both in your essay.

Purpose: Make a clear argument regarding the differences and/or similarities between the two versions of Sojourner Truth’s speech while considering the sources and context, as well as the purpose of the speech itself.

Audience: Your fellow English 101-097 students.

Details:

- MLA formatting: 1” margins on all sides; 12 pt, Times New Roman font; MLA title block in the upper left corner of the first page; MLA page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of each page; double spaced; MLA Works Cited page; etc.
- Minimum 1000 words (including Works Cited page). This equates to about 4 -5 pages in MLA.
- Formal Academic Argument: written to a college audience, follow expectations of academic essays in terms of tone and structure, integrate specific evidence from the text to support the argument (including at least 3 direct quotes in the response portion of your paper).
- Only use third person (he, she, it, him, her, his, hers, its, them, they, theirs). No I, me, my, us, we.

Sample thesis statements

- Mostly Comparison: For their intended audiences, both Robinson and Gage present a nuanced and powerful account of Truth’s 1851 speech.
- Mostly Contrast: Gage’s version of Truth’s 1851 speech relies on racist tropes that detract from Truth’s important message while Robinson’s version uplifts and respects Truth’s message.
- Mostly Contrast: While it is unclear exactly what Sojourner Truth said at the 1851 Women’s conference, Robinson’s version of her speech presents a more believable version of it when compared to Gage’s version’s date of publication, dialect use, and length.

- Mixture of comparison and contrast: Both Gage and Robinson present Truth's main argument and evidence clearly and fairly even though some of the details differ.

Hook	
Intro info (and/or summary)	
Working thesis statement	
Topic Sentence 1	
Support/evidence 1	
Support/evidence 2	
Topic Sentence 2	
Support/evidence 1	
Support/evidence 2	
Topic Sentence 3	
Support/evidence 1	
Support/evidence 2	
Restate thesis using different words	
Summarize main points	
Concluding sentence	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

10: Counterarguments

10.1: 9.1-Countering the opposing viewpoint-- readings

10.2: Activity

10.3: Assignment

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10.1: 9.1-Countering the opposing viewpoint-- readings

Countering the opposing viewpoints

A counterargument is simply an argument that is *counter to* (or opposite of) the argument you are presenting. Counterarguments can be oppositional to your entire thesis/argument, a sub-point of your argument, or even some nuance of a sub-point or sub-argument.

Engaging with a counterargument is usually abbreviated as “counterarguing.” When you provide a counterargument in your essay, you are actually doing four things: presenting the oppositional point of view, conceding, refuting the point, and then returning to your thesis/point.

Why are they necessary?

The ability to successfully present, concede, and refute a counterargument is an excellent rhetorical strategy and evidence of strong critical thinking skills. It also shows that you understand your topic and the conversation around your topic.

It is an important way to strengthen your argument by engaging both ethos and logos.

How to choose a counterargument

Only consider counterarguments that are logical and rational. Your counterargument must be reasonable and valid. Can you actually concede to some aspect of their argument rationally and logically, while remaining aligned with the consensus?

It's typically not a good argument if it is against a premise of your argument. One, doing so may weaken your argument. Two, it may not be a credible, logical argument, and therefore it's not worth addressing or refuting.

While you may not always need to cite a source for your opponent's argument, the argument should not be imaginary. It should be a realistic argument that many people make or believe.

Refuting, or conceding, to the argument should not take you far off your own point; if the counterargument demands that you start talking about another topic to refute it, reconsider using that argument.

There are likely many arguments against your thesis and sub-arguments. Some of them, perhaps many, are not valid because they are based in faith/religious belief, pseudoscience, or outright antisocial prejudices and beliefs. None of these are good choices for counterarguments.

Example: Your topic is long Covid, your working thesis is:

Because long COVID is most prevalent in women, and more often occurs in BIPOC communities, it has been under researched; without awareness raising now and allocation of funds, long Covid may have devastating mental, physical, and economic effects on BIPOC communities throughout the US for decades to come.

Which, if any, of these would be good counterarguments for you to refute?

1. You find a source discussing how some people do not believe that COVID 19 is a real viral infection, and subsequently, they do not believe that long Covid is a disease.
2. A source argues that there are worse things “plaguing” BIPOC communities, like police violence and general racism, than long Covid, so it should not be a focal point in education or funding.
3. A source argues that because Long Covid is similar to other known diseases that are lifelong and severely debilitating, there likely is not much value in focusing a lot of resources into research and treatments since the treatments for those known illnesses may be sufficient.

Item 1) is not a good choice of counterargument because it's against an unstated premise of the argument—that COVID and long COVID do indeed exist. There is no point in refuting this because it does not strengthen your argument. Refuting it would only prove that COVID and long COVID exist, which is a given in your argument.

Item 2) is also not a good choice of counterargument. Because it discusses other topics, like police violence and “general” racism, it may take you far away from your argument. You will end up having to say that anti-black police violence, or racism in general, is

equally important as or less important than funding research into long COVID—which is probably not something you want to argue.

Item 3) is the best choice for a counterargument. It does not argue against a premise, it does not make you stray from your topic: the crux of this argument is that we do not need more resources for long COVID research, but you say we do. This is debatable and will advance your argument.

Parts of the counterargument

Counterarguments must:

1. Present the oppositional point of view (the counterargument).
2. Concede.
3. Refute the point.
4. Return to your thesis/point.

Let's break down these steps.

1. Present the oppositional point of view (the counterargument).

Present and explain the argument. This should be 2-3 sentences. It's crucial that you accurately present the argument and do not fall prey to logical fallacies! If you cannot counter the argument as it is (without manipulating it), do not select it as a counterargument!

Sometimes, depending on the assignment or the nature of your counterpoint, you may have a source for your counterargument. Other times, you may not: your counterargument may be a general idea shared by many.

2. Concede.

We are used to hearing about political candidates who “concedes” after an election, meaning they agree they have lost the election, and their opponent has won. A concession in counterarguing is not an admittance of defeat—at all. A concession is actually a thing that is granted in response to intense demands: it is not a granting of all of the demands.

In counterarguments, the concession is where you give your opponents some ground: you say what is correct or accurate about their argument. Why do this? For one, it's fair and respectful. Ideas worth considering at all are rarely completely incorrect. In the concession, you point out what you do agree with in the counterargument. Secondly, offering a concession increases your ethos even more. Exhibiting respect, being fair and balanced in your perspectives, and also being open, all convey admirable characteristics from the writer.

Your concession should be no more than two sentences, however. While we want to be fair and balanced, we also do not want to lose our persuasiveness.

3. Refute the point.

In this part, you will clearly demonstrate the flaws in the argument of the counterargument. Be specific and logical: use outside sources, use your own logic. Explain your reasoning carefully and stick to the points made in the counterargument. Never resort attacking the character of the counter arguer, or any other logical fallacies.

4. Return to your argument/thesis/point.

This is the most intuitive part—you will return to making your argument on your own terms. This part should logically flow with the 3 counterargument parts before it.

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10.2: Activity

Activity

In the example below, locate the four parts of the counterargument and assess how well they are done. Discuss as a class or small group.

1. Present the oppositional point of view (the counterargument): this should be a paraphrase, perhaps with some short quotes included, and it must be cited. The counterargument must, therefore, be real and not assumed or imagined.
2. Concede—agree with some part/aspect of the counterargument.
3. Refute the counterargument—explain, though, why the counterargument is, as a whole, not a correct argument.
4. Return to your thesis/point—tie in your thesis or point as the “correct” argument.

Counterargument example

A common argument against anti-capitalist movements is that capitalism, with all its problems and inequalities, is still the most effective and democratic economic system that humans have invented: J. Collins, in the article “Flawed but Free,” states that the capitalist system is what has lifted billions of people out of poverty and produced the technological innovation that we enjoy today (19). Similarly, Hopkins and Roe argue that the Communist Khmer Rouge regime in Cambodia and Soviet Russia are prime examples of the devastation that anti-capitalist economic systems bring. They too acknowledge that capitalism is imperfect, but they contrast those minor imperfections with the death, destruction, and stunted social progress of these Communist systems. It is true that capitalist countries, such as the US, are often responsible for the world’s most successful technological innovations (Harper 11). Further, the horrors of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime cannot be understated, and strife and suffering caused by Soviet Russia is still present today. Yet these arguments showcase fundamental misunderstandings and misidentifications. First, even though the US has created numerous technological innovations that have changed the world, the reason for this is certainly not capitalism alone, and capitalism may not even be a factor. Capitalism can in fact impede innovation because it is entirely profit driven, and humans are creatures of habit—people fear the unknown. Therefore, consumers are more likely to purchase things that are familiar, comfortable, and do not challenge their perceptions, and capitalist businesses choose to provide these goods without innovation (Abiola 5). Companies prioritize sales and the ability to make the most money possible while spending the least to create and manufacture their goods (a core tenant of capitalism) rather than prioritizing what humans and societies need to be happy and healthy, or the human desire for art and beauty and thus “true human innovation dies in capitalist hands” (Abiola 6). Also, while capitalist countries boast high GDPs, this is not an indication of individual wealth of its citizens. The US reports that only 11% of US citizens “live in poverty” (“US Economic Report: 2022”), but the US standard metric for poverty is bizarrely low and actually only reflects the poorest. A better way to understand how Americans are doing financially is look at the percentage of US citizens “living paycheck to paycheck”: between 55% and 63% (Rhodes). This means that most Americans are one medical emergency, or one lost job, away from financial collapse. Capitalism has not lifted the US, or any nation, out of poverty, nor has it provided a minimum standard of living accessible to everyone.

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10.3: Assignment

9.3 Assignment

Develop a counterargument for the essay below, or your own essay. Ensure these four sections are included:

1. Present the oppositional point of view (the counterargument): this should be a paraphrase, perhaps with some short quotes included, and it must be cited. The counterargument must, therefore, be real and not assumed or imagined.
2. Concede—agree with some part/aspect of the counterargument
3. Refute the counterargument—explain, though, why the counterargument is, as a whole, not a correct argument
4. Return to your thesis/point—tie in your thesis or point as the “correct” argument

Also consider where you will put the counterargument in the essay, and if you need to revise the introduction, the thesis, or the conclusion because of the counterargument addition.

Example Student Essay

Accessibility and Acceptance: Disability in the US Today

Most everyone at some point in their lives will become disabled. This is a truth we often do not want to consider because it makes us feel scared and vulnerable. However, that fear and vulnerability is something that millions of Americans, of all ages, face every day with little or no emotional, social, or financial support. “Disability” is an umbrella term that can refer to physical, mental, or intellectual impairments, or combinations of them, that make engaging in certain activities or the world in general more difficult or even impossible. Disability occurs because of genetics, environmental factors, disease, injuries, and traumas. While they can technically be short term—for example, a broken arm—disabilities are most commonly understood as long term and even lifelong. Examples of disabilities range from being blind, to autism, to having an amputation, to ADHD. US society has improved in its treatment of disabled people, particularly since the inception for the disability rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and the resulting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Our understanding of what disability is has broadened and become more widespread: we regularly see disabled people in films and in daily life. However, there is still much work to be done to fully include and support disabled people. In the United States today, there is inadequate media portrayals, social acceptance, and financial support and opportunities of disabled individuals which maintains their marginalization.

The media depicts disabled people in harmful ways by portraying them as childish or as jokes, if they choose to depict disabled people at all. While media portrayal of disabled folks has improved, today we still see negative stereotypes and underrepresentation. The popular documentary-style show *Love on the Spectrum* (LotS) depicts young adults with autism engaged in the pursuit of romantic relationships. Like other dating shows, it follows participants’ lives as they get ready for and go on dates. In the article “Exploitation for Acceptance,” author Maree Wolf states “while *Love on the Spectrum* outwardly purports to be inclusive and increase representation of autistic adults, it actually does the opposite. It makes a spectacle—a bumbling circus sideshow—of earnest autistic’s pursuit of community and connection. The participant’s lives aren’t treated as real or serious—they are treated as jokes or ‘aww, cute!’ moments.” LotS’s cast is made up of autistic people, but as Wolf argues, the representation the show offers through editing and dubious interviewing techniques is harmful and dehumanizing, and just a matter of entertainment for the audience at the expense of real people. No person’s humanity should be reduced to a joke or gimmick. Often, when an autistic participant is going about their normal activities in the best way they can in LotS, background music meant to indicate silliness or youthfulness will play (Wolf). This signals to the audience that the autistic individuals they see on their screens are similarly silly or infantile, even when they are being serious. The show conveys the message that autistic people are funny and indeed of protection, but also very different than “normal people.” The presumably non-autistic viewer can feel good that they are viewing autistic people positively and in need of protection, rather than as stupid or unimportant. Most troubling is that LotS is a very popular, well rated show (Wolf) and many disabled folks do defend it because of the representation it offers. However, it stands out as just one example of how the current popular media harmfully depicts disabled people.

Social acceptance of disabled people has also improved in the past several decades, but it is also insufficient and problematic for disabled people’s overall well-being. Acceptance entails more than tolerating or providing bare-minimum support: social acceptance looks like full inclusion and advocacy; it looks like reframing what is “normal” and meeting people where they’re at.

However, social acceptance is in short supply for too many disabled people. In “Uninspired: The Reality of Living with Disability,” by Tavia Sousanis, the lives of “high achieving” disabled people are explored. When Adriana, a 28-year-old civil engineer who is unable to use her legs, got engaged to her long-time boyfriend, she was met with hostility rather than joy. Author Tavia Sousanis reports Adriana’s experience: “‘I could tell his friends, who I know liked me, were like, *are you really going to marry the paraplegic girl?*’ Adriana laughed, but her eyes filled with tears. She continued ‘And his mom—I love her, we’re good now—but she cried when he said he proposed to me because she thought my disability meant she wouldn’t have grandchildren...that’s not even true.’” Adriana’s story shows that despite being accomplished and well-liked, she was reduced to her disability status and deemed undesirable. The results for her were heart-breaking. Several others in Sousanis’s article describe similar situations wherein they are regarded as “courageous,” “awesome,” and “truly inspiring” by those around them because of their disabilities, but when it came to being hired for a good job or being accepted into a new friend or family group, they are often painfully excluded. Maree Wolf also maintains that disabled people are understood as useful when they provoke sympathy or even gratitude in the able-bodied but are disregarded when they need accommodations or true acceptance (“Exploitation for Acceptance”). All humans need some measure of social acceptance to not only fulfill the innate emotional need for connection and kinship, but also to help ensure their physical and medical needs are met. The lack of social acceptance that many disabled people face poses a serious and unacceptable threat to their well-being.

For disabled individuals who are at all able to work, employment is a significant struggle, wages and benefits are low, and thus their needs are often unmet. In “Disabled Workers Saw Record Employment Gains in 2023, But Gaps Remain,” by Kennedy Andara et al., it’s reported that only 38.2 % of disabled, working age adult men were employed in 2023. This is actually a significant improvement, a record low, but it’s clear that this is a problem when compared to the 80% of employed able-bodied men in the same year (Andara et al). It should also be noted that these statistics describe any type of employment—full or part time. Andara et al. notes that “people with disabilities are almost twice as likely to work part time.” This means that actual earnings, access to employer-provided healthcare, and other necessary benefits like paid time off and, ironically, disability insurance may be far less available to disabled workers. Part-time jobs offer less money annually, even if the hourly rate is the same as full-time, and part-time jobs rarely offer paid time off or any other benefits. Further, according to Andara et al., “Black and Hispanic disabled people experienced higher unemployment rates in 2023—at 10.2 percent and 9.2 percent, respectively. The unemployment rates of these groups are consistently above the average for disabled workers, due to the additional hardships of intersecting and compounding racism and ableism.” Not only do disabled people of color experience ableism, and the systemic disadvantages of it, but they experience a compounded disadvantage due to racism. The painful irony is that many disabled people need healthcare and daily assistance that costs much more than the needs of the average, able-bodied people. The result for all disabled people in general is economic difficulty and poverty, and unmet needs.

In conclusion, despite some increases in visibility and legal protections for disabled people, their marginalization remains a serious issue in the US. When portrayed in media, disabled people are too often depicted as juvenile or as inspiration for non-disabled people, furthering harmful stereotypes and exclusion. While social acceptance has improved, it’s still lacking and causes emotional harm and even physical neglect in disabled populations. Finally, disabled people’s access to acquire and maintain employment that offers a living wage and much needed benefits is very limited and results in increased economic hardships. Increasing and furthering the cause of disability rights is crucial not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because disability will—sooner or later—touch all of our lives.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

11: Language Choices in Academic Essays

11.1: Readings- The Power of Language

11.2: Activity

11.3: Assignment

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11.1: Readings- The Power of Language

12.1 The Power of Language

Language is powerful: it not only reflects our realities, but also shapes our realities. Choosing to use language that is inclusive and respectful—and accurate—is not only respectful to ourselves and others, but it helps change our minds.

The reality is that much of the language noted below is completely normal in everyday conversation, and sometimes slips into academic writing. If you use this language, you are not bad or unkind. You're likely just unaware of the effect or history of the language, and that's ok! That's what this chapter is for!

It's normal to feel uncomfortable when learning something new and changing the ways you do something. For some, this brings up defensive feelings like “why do I need to edit myself for other's preferences?” or “I don't mean it like that--this is just some PC nonsense.” If you find yourself thinking such things, remember that you're learning and that this work is important in both an academic sense, and in personal, professional, and communal growth.

Step One: Remove Overtly Ableist Language

Stupid, dumb, lame...these may seem like innocuous terms for things we find unfavorable: the most recent episode of your favorite show was disappointingly *dumb*; the party last weekend was *lamer* than expected. One, these terms are almost uselessly general. What do we mean when we describe a show as dumb? Was it uninteresting, lacking creativity, or were there plot holes? It's very unclear. The only thing that's clear is that it's unfavorable. That leads to the second point: by equating disability—intellectual in the case of dumb and stupid, and physical in the case of lame—to general unfavorability, you not only disrespect people with disabilities, you also further shape an ableist reality for yourself and your audience.

It's true that English, like any widely spoken language, is alive and ever evolving. This means definitions change; it also means new words develop and are increasingly widely adopted, and then die out. Language is dynamic, but it often takes a very long time for a word's meaning to completely change.

For example, over the course of 400-500 years, the word “awful” went from a positive meaning of “something that inspires awe and reverence,” a synonym of “amazing,” to a very negative meaning: “something that is dreadful, terrible.” So, we can't logically make the argument that the terms below have shifted enough to no longer have their problematic, original meanings.

Remove ableist language

- Blind to the fact
- Short-sighted
- Blind sided
- Dumb
- See/seeing as another way to say “understand”
- Lame
- Stupid
- Crazy
- Psycho
- Imbecile
- Falling on deaf ears
- Handicapped
- Retarded
- Crippled/cripple/crippled by
- Bound to a wheelchair (wheelchair bound)

- deaf
- manic
- Feeble-Minded
- Normal/abnormal
- Suffers from [a disease or disability]
- Do not refer to people as “females” or “males” unless you have precise reason to do so—say “women/girls” or “men/boys” instead, if noting gender is necessary.

Step Two: Replace Passive Ableist Language when speaking about ability-related issues

Ableist language can often be replaced by more specific phrases, especially in the case of dumb and lame described above. However, we often mean well, and have thoughtfully selected the language we use, but still are not using the most representative and respectful language. Below are some guidelines.

Disabilities/disabled people in general:

- Disabled
- Has a disability
- With a disability
- With a chronic health condition
- Has a chronic health condition
- Neuroatypical/ Neurotypical (replaces abnormal and normal)
- Neurodivergent

People with physical or mobility disabilities:

- Uses a wheelchair
- In a wheelchair
- With a physical disability
- With a mobility disability
- Uses crutches
- Uses a cane
- Uses a walker
- Has [whatever condition the individual states they have]

People on the autism spectrum:

- Autistic
- On the autism spectrum
- With autism [if preferred by individual]

People with intellectual disabilities:

- Has an intellectual disability
- With an intellectual disability
- With a cognitive disability
- Has a cognitive disability

People with sensory impairments or disabilities:

- Blind
- Low vision
- Deaf
- Hard of hearing

Keep in mind that it's often not the disability itself that keeps people from doing things or being included, but rather other's perceptions of normality and the inaccessible way we create the world. Therefore, instead of saying something like "her blindness kept her from reading all the sci-fi novels she wanted to read" it would be more accurate to say, "the unavailability of braille and audiobooks in the sci-fi genre made her unable to read all the books she wanted to read."

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11.2: Activity

12.2 Activity

First, read the text below. Then, in a few sentences, describe why the language used in the text is problematic. Finally, revise the following text to replace the ableist language or concepts.

Dr. De Palma, an ASL scholar and handicap rights advocate, has struggled with an extreme case of Ménière's disease for the past decade, and has suffered from autism and being wheelchair bound from the age of six. His Ménière's disease caused his deafness at the age of 34, but he sees it as a benefit: "Because of my autism, and because I couldn't run around like the other kids, people thought of me as 'dumb' and 'weird,' so I was often excluded. I didn't have a lot of friends. It wasn't until I lost my hearing that I found real community. The deaf community welcomed me in like no other group had before" ("Creating Kinship Structures in Disabled Groups").

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11.3: Assignment

12.3 Assignment

Add a language review to your drafting process. Writings of all sorts don't always use the best language as they draft their texts. Furthermore, when you're just learning or diving into a topic, it takes time to internalize and "automatically" do the thing! So, if just language is new to you, be patient with yourself and know you will make mistakes. The important part is to continually try to do better.

So, wherever you are in your drafting process, add in **a language review**. And, going forward in the class, try to ensure you're using inclusive language as you're drafting .

For this assignment, conduct a language review on the most complete draft of an essay that you. Use the guidelines above, but also note anything not covered by the guidelines that seems potentially exclusionary or harmful. For this first attempt, highlight any language that needs to be changed. Then create another draft of the exact same essay draft and correct the issues.

Then, reflect on the following:

1. Is there a trend in the changes you made?
2. Do you disagree with any of the changes you made?
3. Consider the quantity of changes you made. Were there many? Were there few? Why do you think that might be? Consider the topic of your essay draft in answering this question.
4. Did you find any language questionable, but were unsure how to correct it?

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

12: Understanding the Writing Process and Planning for Success

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12.2: Activity

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12.1: Readings

1.1 The Process

It's human nature to want to “cut corners” or take the path of least resistance. However, for well done academic writing, and for succeeding in this course, there aren't any real short cuts. First, it's pivotal to understand that academic writing is a *recursive*, *iterative* process. That means it's a lengthy and involved process.

Recursive here refers to something that is repeated, over and over again—and again—all with the goal of improvement and refinement. In this case, we mean that you will repeat the sequential process of 1) brainstorming, 2) outlining, 3) drafting, and 4) editing over and over again for each assignment in order to ultimately reach the final version of each assignment.

Iterative refers also to repetition of a process that produces *iterations*, and here we use *iteration* to refer to any single step in the process.

The **writing process** generally consists of the following steps.

1. Reading (and re-reading) the texts
2. Understanding the relevant concepts
3. Understanding the assignment
4. Brainstorming
5. Outlining
6. Drafting/composing
7. Editing/revising

You'll notice that three of the seven steps listed above do not include writing, but they are crucial steps. Essentially, you must thoroughly understand what you are writing about and why you are writing before you can adequately compose an essay.

While you may find yourself repeating any and all of these seven steps, you are more likely to find yourself repeating steps 4 through 7. For most students, their process for this course looks like this:

1,2, 3, 1, 4, 5, 6, 7,4,5,6,7, 4, 6, 7, 6, 7

Yes, that's a lot of steps, and yes, you need to plan on engaging in the process in that depth. Being a strong writer does not exempt you from full engagement in the proscribed process.

[Plan on getting help](#)

Step in the Writing Process	Who to see for help (you can always ask your professor for assistance, though they may direct you to the resources below)
Reading (and re-reading) the texts	Reading tutor
Understanding the relevant concepts	Your professor
Understanding the assignment	Your professor, Writing tutor
Brainstorming	Writing tutor
Outlining	Writing tutor, Your professor
Drafting/composing	Writing tutor, Your professor
Editing/revision	Writing tutor

 A diagram illustrates the recursivity of the writing process; arrows form an endless circle and are labeled “Brainstorming,” “Composing,” and “Editing.”

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Planning for success

English 101 or 101-097 is required for most every degree program and certification for good reason: it's a course designed to help you in arguably every other class you will take at college or university level and in your life as thoughtful, informed individual.

Academic success in general relies on your ability to plan ahead: you constantly need to assess how much study time you need to complete each assignment or assignment component. If you run into trouble, e.g., you're struggling with a concept, you will also need to factor in time for acquiring assistance. Maybe this means meeting with a tutor, or your professor. If you're taking classes, have a job or two, have family responsibilities, or all of the above, it's even more crucial for you to plan ahead to allot time for your reading, writing, and revising.

Your professors and the academic support staff—tutors, wellness center and ACCESS coordinators, among many others—all want you to succeed. When you need help, please ask for it.

Use these three steps to plan for your success.

1. Consider your real needs and preferences. Is focusing difficult for you? Is your attention best used in short spurts? Is reading a challenge? If you crumble under pressure, waiting to the last minute to finish an assignment isn't a good plan.

Consider your other obligations:

- Relational and familial needs
- Work
- Other course work
- Health and wellness needs.
- o How do you recharge your battery?
- o You need food—proper nutrition, adequate sleep, exercise, to live.

2. Make time to do each step of the writing process:

1. Reading (and re-reading) the texts
2. Understanding the relevant concepts
3. Understanding the assignment
4. Brainstorming
5. Outlining
6. Drafting/composing
7. Editing/revising

3. Organize your schedule/create a calendar

- The due dates for all formal assignments are listed in the course schedule on Brightspace. While some of the homework is TBA or will shift, every graded component of your research project has a due date. Consider your other course schedules, and other life obligations, as well as your known patterns and energy levels (e.g. you know you will not be a functional person the three days following Thanksgiving, so you plan to complete your work ahead of time). A friend's birthday or your cousin's wedding are not good reasons for an extension.
- Be realistic about your energy and needs.
- If you do need an extension, know that it will put you behind and make your progress more difficult. It should only be requested if absolutely necessary. That said, if you do need an extension, ask me via email as soon as possible. Also, be honest, please. I've found students' real situations make for much more compelling reasons for extensions than their fabrications.

How to Revise an essay draft

Revisions are divided into two distinct types: *content* and *mechanical*.

The **content revisions** deal with the thesis, topic sentences, concepts, logic, evidence, transitions, introductions, and conclusions that make up your essay. Content revisions are the most important and should always come first!

Mechanical revisions deal with sentence-level mechanics—your grammar, syntax, punctuation, and word choice. We'll also include MLA formatting of the essay and the MLA in-text citations and Works Cited page in this category. While all of these mechanical revisions are important, they are secondary to your content revisions. For some, it may be helpful to only work on mechanical revisions in the draft before the final essay.

It's important to understand the differences between these two types of revisions. You should plan on doing *content revisions* at different times than you do *mechanical revisions*. It makes good logical sense to do content revisions first and then do mechanical revisions. If you do mechanical revisions first, your content may change, and then you'll have to do another round of mechanical revisions.

If you work with a tutor on your revisions, which is recommended, be able to clearly articulate if you want help with content revision or mechanical revisions, and do not expect the tutor to work with you on both in one session.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Revising Your Paper

Content Revision checklist

General questions

- Did I answer/respond to the assignment prompt?
- Is my essay tailored to the stated audience?
- Does the essay accomplish the stated purpose?
- Did I use all required sources?
- Do I meet all other requirements discussed in the assignment description?

Ensure the following are present:

Introductory paragraph with

- A hook (sentence)
- Introductory content that provides adequate information about the topic so that your reader will understand your thesis (ensure this part aligns with the assignment description)
- A thesis statement that suggests the structure of what will follow

Multiple body paragraphs that

- Have an argumentative topic sentence as their first sentence and corresponds directly to the thesis statement.
- Stick to the topic sentence and don't go off course
- Provide adequate evidence to support the argument in the topic sentence
- Engages sources that support the argument
 - o Each use of a source is clearly cited
 - o Use a signal phrase and or a parenthetical citation
 - o Have quote sandwiches: each quote or paraphrase is introduced, presented, and then you connect the quote/paraphrase to your topic sentence
- Are logical
- Are well explained to the stated audience
- Effectively use transitional words and phrases

Has a conclusion that

- Restates the core argument of the thesis in the first sentence.
- Summarizes each and every main point, i.e. restates each topic sentence
- Ends with a concluding thought (a sentence) that serves as an inverse hook.

Mechanical Revision Checklist

- Minimal or no punctuation errors
 - o No comma splices
 - o Every sentence starts with a capital letter
 - o Every sentence ends with a period (question marks and exclamation points, and their types of sentences, should be avoided)
 - o Semicolons and colons are properly used
 - o Commas are properly used
 - o Single quotes [‘example’] and double quote [“example”] are used properly
- There are minimal to no grammatical errors
 - o In particular, look out for
 - o dangling modifiers
 - o subject verb disagreement \run on sentences
- No fragments!!! Every sentence is complete with at least one subject and predicate.
- Writing is concise, succinct: no extra or “filler” words/phrases
- No repetition
- No idiomatic phrases or platitudes
- Uses just language
- Uses gender-neutral language, as appropriate
- Uses a vocabulary appropriate for the context and the audience and jargon is explained

As you proceed in this course, wherever you are in the drafting process, once you have a complete draft, use the *Content Revision Checklist* to guide your revising. Repeat as necessary. Then, use the *Mechanical Revision Checklist* as you approach the final draft

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12.2: Activity

1.2 Activity

In class, write a paragraph about your previous experiences in engaging in the writing process, including revisions, and what you think. Be honest—your grades for that course have already been finalized, and no one is judging you here. Did you previously engage in all or part of the process outlined above? Or did you typically only do one draft—the final draft—hours before the assignment was due? Reflect on how you felt engaging the process as you previously have, how it differs from or is the same as what’s outlined here, and how you feel about engaging in the prescribed process. Again, honesty is key here. If the process sounds like “too much,” say it, or if this is what you’ve always done and you have no concerns, say that.

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12.3: Assignment

1.3 Assignment

Using the course schedule, the course requirements, and your own awareness of your other responsibilities and needs, create a calendar for yourself for this semester. Also include assignments for other classes.

Use either the calendar associated with your email—your CCC email has an Outlook Calendar, or if you prefer Gmail, a calendar is available there too—or a calendar template in Microsoft Word.

Be sure to include office hour visits and potential tutoring appointments.

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13.1: Readings

3.1 Summarizing

Summaries, whether they are just a couple of sentences or an entire paragraph, answer the question, “What is the text about?”

Since summaries are brief descriptions of the main ideas in a text, being able to summarize well involves both critical reading skills and solid writing skills. This means you must thoroughly read and understand the text before you begin writing the summary of it. Use **annotation** and **critical reading** as you prepare a summary. If you can write a good summary, you demonstrate your critical reading skills as well as your writing skills.

All summaries should identify the text name/title, the author(s), the thesis of the text, as well as the main supporting points presented in the text. Depending on the assignment, the summary may also include some further details in the text that relate to the overall topic or essay argument at hand.

A good summary

- is written in present tense (*The authors states*, not *the author stated*)
- begins by stating the title of the text and the author
- reports the thesis of the text in the first or second sentence
- defines critical terms or phrases that are central to the author's argument
- focuses on the most important parts of the argument/reports the main points
- may include some supporting details, depending on the assignment
- is *much* shorter than the original (typically fewer than 10 sentences)
- uses reporting verbs
- is objective
- does not have any quotations

How to be objective

Being objective is lacking bias or opinion. For summaries, your opinion, critique, and response must be omitted. You are only reporting what the text says—do not evaluate it any way. Simply report what the text says.

Here are some examples of not being objective while summarizing a text:

1. In the article “Don’t Demolish the System,” Alana June provides several illogical arguments to support her poorly constructed claim that the criminal justice system is fundamentally just and not in need of reform.

“Illogical” and “poorly constructed” are opinions and evaluations of the text—do not include them. With those words excluded, this summary is objective.

2. The author vividly describes the measures taken by political leaders to deny the Flint Water Crisis.

“Vividly” is an opinion and an evaluation of the text—do not include it. With that word excluded, this summary is objective.

Reporting verbs

Below are lists of “reporting verbs” that you can use to describe what the text or the author are saying their texts.

The author

- argues
- reports
- states

- claims
- posits
- criticizes
- describes
- concludes

The article

- examines
- covers
- reports on
- deals with
- focuses on
- presents
- describes
- addresses

Constructing the first sentence of your summary

For most assignments, you will assume that your reader/audience is not familiar with the text or subject on which you are writing. This means you must introduce the author and the text right away in your summary. Here's a template of the first sentence in your summary, along with a color-coded example.

In [text name], [author name (may include relevant bio info)] [reporting verb] that [author's thesis].

In "Tent Cities: A Right to Housing," activist Rae Butler argues that so-called tent cities are inevitability in our society and that all people, regardless of income, have an absolute right to adequate housing.

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13.2: Activity

3.2 Class Activity

Example Summary Paragraph

In “Tent Cities and the Right to Housing,” activist Rae Butler argues that so-called tent cities are inevitable in our current society and that all people, regardless of income, have an absolute right to adequate housing. Citing the rise in rental costs and the housing crisis across the US, Butler shows that tent cities, or makeshift collections of tent homes occupied by those experiencing homelessness, are a growing problem. Such encampments are vulnerable to weather hazards, bug and rodent infestations, waste issues and as such cause issues in neighboring communities. They are often taken down by local authorities. However, when these tents are taken down by police, the occupants have few if any viable alternatives for housing. Butler then argues that all people have a right to housing, so removing these tents is a human rights violation unless alternative housing is provided. The author concludes that until communities and policy makers address the causes of homelessness and provide housing for all, tent cities—and all the problems they bring with them—will remain.

Read the summary above and then discuss and answer the questions below.

1. Is this a good summary? Note whether or not the summary above meets all the criteria for a “good summary.”

Remember, a good summary

- o is written in present tense (*The authors states*, not *the author stated*)
- o begins by stating the title of the text and the author
- o reports the thesis of the text in the first or second sentence
- o defines critical terms or phrases that are central to the author's argument
- o focuses on the most important parts of the argument/reports the main points
- o may include some supporting details, depending on the assignment–N/A
- o is *much* shorter than the original (typically fewer than 10 sentences) –N/A
- o uses reporting verbs
- o is objective
- o does not have any quotations

2. Is the use of “absolute” in the first sentence objective or not? Explain. (In “Tent Cities and the Right to Housing,” activist Rae Butler argues that so-called tent cities are inevitable in our current society and that all people, regardless of income, have an absolute right to adequate housing.)

3. Do you think it would be appropriate to add the sentence below to the summary? Why or why not? On what does your answer depend?

“Butler toured three tent cities within St. Louis, Portland (Oregon), and Chicago, and spoke directly to the residents about their situations and experiences.”

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13.3: Assignment

3.2 Class Activity

Example Summary Paragraph

In “Tent Cities and the Right to Housing,” activist Rae Butler argues that so-called tent cities are inevitable in our current society and that all people, regardless of income, have an absolute right to adequate housing. Citing the rise in rental costs and the housing crisis across the US, Butler shows that tent cities, or makeshift collections of tent homes occupied by those experiencing homelessness, are a growing problem. Such encampments are vulnerable to weather hazards, bug and rodent infestations, waste issues and as such cause issues in neighboring communities. They are often taken down by local authorities. However, when these tents are taken down by police, the occupants have few if any viable alternatives for housing. Butler then argues that all people have a right to housing, so removing these tents is a human rights violation unless alternative housing is provided. The author concludes that until communities and policy makers address the causes of homelessness and provide housing for all, tent cities—and all the problems they bring with them—will remain.

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1. Is this a good summary? Note whether or not the summary above meets all the criteria for a “good summary.”

Remember, a good summary

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