

Dendrite Deadlift: Blogging your way to a better argument

A well-cultivated critical thinker:

- ✓ raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely
- ✓ gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively
- ✓ comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards
- ✓ thinks open mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences
- ✓ communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems

Critical thinking is, in short, self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking. It entails effective communication and problem solving abilities and a commitment to overcome our native egocentrism and sociocentrism.

A blog requires typing coherent, logical, informed, and well-written responses to Topics of the Week. During the week, students also respond to comments from other students. As a result, during the semester students will improve their writing, discussion, persuasion, and critical-thinking skills. Many college professors in all areas of the curriculum require students to participate in online discussions or blogs.

How Do I Participate in the Blog?

1. Read the requirements on this page carefully.
2. Go to Turnitin.com and log in.
3. Once in Turnitin.com, click on the “Discussion” tab.
4. Click on the “Topic Title” of the week’s discussion.
5. Click on “Reply to this Topic.”
6. Type your reply using the guidelines below.
 - a. Must be between 150 – 200 words.
 - b. Must use Standard English (no texting lingo) that is properly punctuated.
 - c. Must NOT use inappropriate language.
 - d. Must maintain a respectful tone.
 - e. Must be submitted by the assigned due date and time.
7. When finished composing your response, click on “Submit Reply to Topic.”
8. You may edit your comment at any time prior to the assigned due date and time.

9. You must also contribute to, elaborate on, refute a comment made by one of your peers. To do this, find the contribution that you want to comment on and click the “reply” link that is located just below the comment. Saying “you agree” is NOT a way to fulfill this requirement.

Why Won't I Receive Credit if I Respond to the Topic of the Week?

- Comments contain too many grammatical, spelling, or usage mistakes. *(Tip: Type your comment/post in Word first. Then copy and paste it into the blog.)*
- Student posts his/her own comment but fails to respond to at least one other student.
- Student does not respond initially to the topic of the Week by 11:59pm on the assigned due date. Late entries, even if they are the result of computer issues, will not count because no one will go back and read old comments.
- Student posts comments but does not respond to the assigned topic – aka “being off topic.”
- Student uses inappropriate language. Do not use profanity.
- Student fails to maintain a respectful tone. Do not belittle other students or their ideas. Convince people that your ideas hold more merit because of the strength of your argument – not by making fun of other people or by intimidating them. That’s lame.
- Student’s original post to the Topic of the Week does not meet the length requirement.

How Will I be Graded?

All students will earn a 100 test grade for their collective submissions during the respective grading period.

Final Thoughts

The online discussion must remain civil at all times. This is an opportunity for you to package your thoughts in a constructive manner in order to persuade your audience. Don’t ruin it by being careless with your emotions.