

Critical Reading Assignment

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.

Concurrently, being prepared to have productive, mature conversations about assigned texts is a key component of your growth as a reader and writer. The structure of the assignment below is intended to walk you through the expected critical thinking processes that come with reading and “working” any text – whether it be in printed or spoken form.

1. **PRINT** the assigned reading 2 to a page.
2. Read the text 1 time underlining/highlighting things as you go.
3. Stop. Think about it.
4. Reread. **ANNOTATE** as you reread. This means you are actively using a writing utensil (pen or pencil) to underline crucial quotes/passages, write questions in the margins, define words you don't know, make note of key rhetorical strategies (refer to blue chart), make connections with other studied works, etc. Do not expect instant gratification from this kind of process. Successful critical reading will take **TIME** and **EFFORT**.
5. Setup a Word document using MLA format. This includes assembling a citation for the assigned text.
6. Write a sophisticated, stylistically pleasing précis (brief summary = 75-125 words) of the text that does the following:
 - a. identifies the title of the text and the author
 - b. addresses the (1) exigence – what has compelled the author to write? This often involves the context, whether it is historical, social, etc.
 - c. addresses the (2) audience – to whom is the author writing or speaking?
 - d. addresses the (3) purpose – what effect does the author hope to have on his/her audience?

7. Develop 3 original, specific Socratic Circle discussion questions about the text.
 - a. Question 1: This question should investigate something related to the author's choice when crafting the text.
 - b. Question 2: This question should ask your audience to draw comparisons/contrasts with a previously read text.
 - c. Question 3: This question should apply an argument presented by the text to a contemporary issue.
 8. Write an analysis of the rhetorical strategies (minimum of 300 words) the author uses to convey his/her message to his/her audience. Support your analysis with specific references to the text.
 9. Defend, challenge, or qualify the argument presented in the text (minimum of 300 words).
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Directions for turning in assignment:

1. Submit completed document to Turnitin.com. Print the originality report 2 to a page.
2. Print your Word document 2 to a page. Staple the originality report to the back of your Word document.
3. Stamp the first page of your stapled papers with the date stamp and put them in the box at the conclusion of class on the assigned due date. If you are absent, you must email me your completed assignment and bring a hard copy with Turnitin.com originality report on the day you return.