

Essay #2: Evaluating Two Primary Texts

Assignment

For your next essay, you will write an argument in which you use evaluative thinking to persuade your audience to see the value (or lack of value) of a literary text and a nonliterary text. Refer to Chapter 2, Critical Reading and Critique in *A Sequence for Academic Writing*.

What You Will Learn

Making an evaluation is a common thinking and writing strategy for your personal and professional life. Any time you consider which restaurant to go to, which movie to see, or which car to buy, you are making an evaluation. At the professional level, you may evaluate personnel, decide which individual to hire for a position, or choose a health care plan for your company. All of these decisions involve making an evaluation.

Basic Features of Evaluation Essays

- A clearly defined subject, often framed as a question in the early stages of writing
- Criteria for evaluating your chosen subject
- A convincing argument that shows how your subject meets or does not meet the criteria
- A conclusion which states your final judgment about the subject and answers the question

Assigned Topic

Statements of belief can take many forms—religious belief, belief in certain institutions, belief in a certain worldview or perspective, or belief in a philosophical idea or principal (the goodness of human nature, for example).

In this paper you are asked to evaluate (make a judgment about) two statements of belief—one literary and one non-literary. Your essay should argue whether your selected texts are rhetorically effective—using specific criteria that you will define in your essay.

Requirements

In order to successfully complete the assignment, your paper must:

1. Introduce one literary work from the Unit 2 Course Calendar *and one non-literary work* (photograph, video clip, clip from a film, advertisement, brochure, other visual art, etc.) that have *similar* underlying beliefs or claims.
2. Define specific criteria for an effective statement of belief. Explain which features a statement of belief must have in order to be *rhetorically effective*.
3. Using textual evidence from both primary sources, evaluate whether these texts are successful statements of belief based on the criteria you have selected. Successful papers for this assignment typically argue that one text is more effective than the other. Your evaluation essay should remain focused on exactly *how* these texts successfully meet or fail to meet the criteria you established.
4. Offer significance—answer the *so what?* question.

Format

- MLA Style for heading, citations, and works cited
- At least 1,250 words for final drafts (at least 4 complete, typed, double-spaced pages)
- Use 1-inch margins on all sides of the paper
- You must have a works cited page at the end of the essay