## Essay 1: Summary and Response (More Transparent)

### Prompt:

For this assignment, write a 4-6 page essay that summarizes and responds to an assigned text of your choosing.

### Purpose:

* All of your major essays in this class will involve summarizing and responding to texts, so this essay gives you the chance to practice core skills that you will build on throughout the quarter.
* Summarizing accurately, and responding critically, are skills you will use regularly in other college classes and when writing in the workplace.
* On a personal level, summary and response skills empower you to make informed decisions and advocate for what you think is right for yourself, your family, and your community.

### Skills:

* Read Critically
* Use the writing process
* Write about and respond to texts
* Produce writing with a thesis or central purpose
* Produce specific details, facts, or examples to support your thesis
* Integrate sources and avoid plagiarism
* Write clear, grammatically and mechanically correct prose

### ****Getting Started:****

* Review our five assigned texts from Unit 1, and choose one to write about in this essay.
	+ Warning: although it may be tempting, avoid choosing what seems like the “shortest” or “easiest” text. This can make it difficult to generate detailed and thoughtful responses. Instead, choose a text that you find to be genuinely interesting, challenging, and/or provocative, as this will set you up to do your best writing.
* Once you have chosen a text to write about, re-read it carefully.  Identify its main ideas and track how they work together to develop the core argument of the text.
* Now choose five main ideas from the text to focus on in your essay.  These should be drawn from the beginning, middle, and end of the text, and they should all be important to the text’s core argument.

### ****Planning your Essay:****

* Before you write your essay, make and outline. Do this by writing down in your own words each of the five main ideas from the text that you want to summarize and respond to.
* Next, state your position in response to each main idea (agree, disagree, or both), and explain your basic reasoning for taking that position.
* Next, write a thesis statement that articulates your position in response to the text as a whole.
* Consider working with tutors in our Writing Center while crafting your outline for this essay.
	+ Warning: students who skip the outlining step often struggle on this essay. Think of trying to build a house without a blueprint.  If the pieces don’t fit, or the foundation isn’t solid, things have to be torn down and rebuilt.  It’s the same with writing.  Without planning and outlining, more of your rough draft will have to be cut and/or rewritten.

### ****Drafting the Introduction Section:****

* In the first paragraph of your essay, summarize the text you’ve chosen to write about.
	+ See the TSIS Chapter 2 and the summary section of our [“Essay 1 Guide”](https://canvas.northseattle.edu/courses/1872313/modules/4831309) module for further guidance.
* In your next paragraph, state your position in response to the text. Culminate in your thesis statement.
	+ See TSIS Chapter 4 and the thesis section of our [“Essay 1 Guide”](https://canvas.northseattle.edu/courses/1872313/modules/4831309) module for further guidance.

### ****Drafting the Body Section:****

* Use the "quote sandwich" method from They Say I Say (TSIS) to cite, using a mixture of summary and quotation, each of the five main ideas from the text you’ve chosen to write about.
* Next, use templates from TSIS Chapter 4 to respond to each main idea by agreeing, disagreeing, or both.  Be sure to fully explain your reasoning for taking each position.
* All five of your body paragraphs will consist of a quote sandwich first, and then a response that agrees, disagrees, or both.
* All five of your body paragraphs should work together to support and develop your thesis.
* See TSIS Chapters 3 & 4, and our [“Essay 1 Guide”](https://canvas.northseattle.edu/courses/1872313/modules/4831309) module, for more information on how to draft the body section of this essay.

### ****Drafting the Conclusion Section:****

* Your conclusion should sum up the main points from your body paragraphs, and culminate in your overall position in response to the text as a whole.
	+ See the Conclusion Section from our ["Essay 1 Guide"](https://canvas.northseattle.edu/courses/1872313/modules/4831309) module for more guidance.

### ****Revising your Essay:****

* After you’ve completed your rough draft, set the essay aside for a time.  Get some distance from it.  Get a good night’s sleep before you come back to revise.
* Be sure to post your rough draft to our workshop discussion on the day it's due, and to actively participate in our online Essay 1 workshop.  During workshop, you’ll get feedback from two classmates, and provide feedback to two classmates as well.
* Consider your group’s feedback as you make decisions about how to further develop and revise your essay.
	+ Remember that you are making the choices here.  You have to decide if the feedback from your classmates makes sense.  Check the assignment guidelines and rubric, and review the ["Essay 1 Guide"](https://canvas.northseattle.edu/courses/1872313/modules/4831309) module.  Does the feedback match up with what the assignment is asking for, and how you will be graded?  Does the feedback match what you really think, what you really want to say?
* As you revise your essay, your ideas will evolve and change.  Writing is a process of discovery, and what you discover needs to be applied to the entire essay.  For example, if your position changes in a body paragraph, this change will impact your thesis statement and conclusion sections, and potentially other body paragraphs as well.
* Before you turn in your final essay, be sure that you spend time proof-reading it for grammatical and punctuation errors.  Look for opportunities to tighten up transitions and make your sentences more clear, fluid, and concise.
* Consider working with tutors in the Page One Writing and Language Center throughout the revision process, and contact me if via email if you'd like to schedule and office hours appointment.

### ****MLA Formatting and In-Text Citations:****

* As you enter the final stages of the writing process, make sure that your essay follows MLA formatting and citation guidelines, and make sure that you include MLA in-text citations in each of the “they say” sections of your writing, whether summarized, quoted, or both.  While you are asked to include in-text citations in this essay, you do not need to include a Works Cited list.  For more information on MLA guidelines, visit the [Purdue OWL MLA Formatting and Style Guide.](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

### Due Dates

The final draft of this essay should be 4 – 6 pages long and will be worth 175 points.  The final draft should be submitted online via Canvas by 11:59pm on Monday, February 3rd.

Your preliminary outline for the essay will be due on Monday, January 27th,  and your Rough Draft will be due on Thursday, January 30th.

That about covers it.  As always, have fun with this, and let me know if you have any questions!





## Essay 1: Summary and Response (Less Transparent)

One kind of academic essay asks you to read and digest the ideas of others and then to respond by offering your own considered and supported thoughts in response to theirs. That's your task here.

Assume your audience hasn't read the text you’ve chosen to respond to. Write a 4 - 6 page essay that first briefly summarizes the gist of the text, and then responds to it by agreeing, disagreeing, or both.

To write a successful essay, you should do the following:

* Begin your introduction by summing up the gist of the text to which you are responding.
* Finish your introduction by briefly stating your response to the text’s argument: agree, disagree, or both (thesis statement).
* Focus each body paragraph on responding to one key claim from the text. Provide ample reasoning and illustration to support your response.
* Conclude your essay by summing up the key points you’ve made in the body of your essay and explaining how they add up to form your overall response to the text (agree, disagree, or both).

This essay should follow MLA formatting and citation guidelines, and it should include in-text citations where appropriate. No works cited page is necessary.

The final draft of this essay should be 4 – 6 pages long and will be worth 150 points. **The final draft is due on Monday, November 7th, and should include your rough draft and workshop comments.**

That about covers it. As always, have fun with this, and let me know if you have any questions!

### Key Takeaways from TILTing this assignment:

* At first I dove right into the purpose of the assignment before realizing I needed to start with a brief prompt that sums up, in a general sense, what the assignment is asking students to do.
* Spending time thinking about and articulating the purpose of the assignment led me to discuss with students how the skills they’re learning might be valuable and meaningful in real life.
* Because the learning objectives are all skills based in ENGL 101, I decided not to include a knowledge section in this assignment.
* I struggled with which skills to include from the English 101 MCO. I wanted to pair down the list to just a few, assignment-specific learning objectives, but I soon realized that students deploy a wide range of skills when crafting an essay, and to be fully transparent I had to include all of the skills on which they will be evaluated.
* Recognizing the number and complexity of the skills students employ in this assignment, and recognizing that many students are not yet proficient in these skills, I decided that more scaffolding is necessary to help students get to the finish line successfully. To this end, I decided to extend the due date one week later into the quarter and use extra time to practice component skills before stringing them together in a major essay.
* When crafting the tasks section, I quickly realized that it had to be divided into six sub-headings: getting started, planning, drafting the intro, drafting the body, drafting the conclusion, revising, and MLA in-text citations. Dividing the tasks in this way reinforces the need to divide the project into manageable steps, and use the writing process to progress through these steps successfully.
* Even after better organizing the task section, though, it quickly became apparent that an assignment description could not provide all of the instructions needed for each part of the essay. To solve this problem, I did two things:
	+ I actively directed students to the course resources, such as our textbook and modules, that provide more information on how to do each step.
	+ I created an Essay Guide Module that includes a more comprehensive list of instructions, as well as examples, for each step, and I referenced this module in the tasks section of the assignment.
* Maybe my favorite part of this exercise was including warnings of what not to do in the tasks list. After teaching this assignment many times, I know where students often go wrong, and I’m finding it very helpful to call these common mistakes out explicitely not just in class, but in the assignment, too.
* Now that I have a much more detailed set of instructions and examples for students to reference when working on this essay, the question arises, have I done too much of the work for them? I don’t think so. I’ve only helped to demystify the writing process. The students still have to apply these instructions to craft their own unique and complex essays, and in doing so, they still have to meet rigorous standards. They just better understand what these standards are, and how to go about achieving them.