

Writing Assignment #1

For your first assignment, you will be writing a 1000-1500 word critical analysis using an Op-Ed piece from a list provided by your instructor. First, you should **isolate the main points of the speech by identifying the subject and focusing on the central message of the subject**. You may ask yourself, "What is the context in which this speech was given?" Analyzing the text's historical context will assist you in identifying the subject and its message. While your goal is to summarize the source's central message, it is more important that you identify the classes of argument the writer has used to illustrate their message.

You should identify within the speech more than one of the following classes:

- A **Factual** argument tries to convince an audience that a certain condition or event actually exists or has existed. Factual arguments, though they sound simple, are the most ambitious type of argument attempting to convince readers of the truth or factuality of a claim.
- A **Causal** argument tries to convince readers that one event or condition caused another or is likely to cause another in the future. Causal arguments can rarely claim the truth or certainty; rather, most are deemed successful if they establish a certain cause or future effect as probable.
- An **Evaluative** argument makes a value judgment. Because evaluations are tied up in personal tastes and opinions, they are the hardest of all arguments to make successfully; nevertheless, they can be reasonable and effective.
- A **Recommendation** argument tries to get readers to *do* something, to follow a course of action. While the other three classes of arguments aim for "armchair" agreement, most recommendations want the reader's agreement to be translated into action.

A well-written critical response does not say, "My summary is ..." and "Now, here's what I think..." The summary of the central message and identification of classes should be well integrated.

In summarizing a longer speech, you may find it more helpful to divide the original text into sections and summarize each focusing on one class of argument within each. You may be tempted to interpret something the author says or make a judgment about the value of the author's point, but **keep your own opinions out of the paper**. There will be sufficient material for you to summarize in order to meet the requirements of this paper.

Furthermore, your paper should provide an analysis of the speaker's intended audience pointing out *Who* the intended audience is, *Why* they should hear the speech, and *What* they should be able to do after hearing the speech. Include an analysis of the Kairos (time and place) of the speech, and also include a discussion of the communities who are involved.

This paper will follow all MLA guidelines. You **do not** need to provide a hard copy of your source for this paper; however, you will need to provide a work cited entry.