

What is an argument? In academic writing, an argument is a main idea, a claim or a thesis statement, backed up with evidence that supports your idea. Your ability to do this well will allow you to move beyond work which is just accumulation of fact and detail and passive commentary (agree/disagree/, like/dislike.) Beyond writing about a “topic”, you can now stake out a position. Think of yourself as a researcher posing a research question. Prove why yours is the position of a thinking person. Your paper should be led by reasoning and evidence.

When beginning to write, ask yourself, “Why is this important?” Demonstrate your ability to use sources in ways that go beyond what you have read or heard.

Arguments in academic writing are complex. They take time. They require incubation. Your academic argument will need to be more than a simple statement such as “The Britney Spears conservatorship seems suspect.” Such a statement might capture your initial impressions of that issue as you researched it in class; however, you would need to look and see and think about what caused that suspicion, such as “Britney Spears is in her late 30s and yet silenced about her professional destiny and her finances: who speaks for Britney and why?” To develop your argument, you would then define your terms and prove your claim with evidence from the databases you found in the Hofstra library.

Having looked and seen and thought about your choice of visual art, make some connection with the other work. Here’s a good way to think about looking and seeing and thinking about art: <https://theconversation.com/three-simple-steps-to-understand-art-look-see-think-33020>

Assignment: Choose one(1) visual work from the Hofstra Museum exhibit https://issuu.com/hofstra/docs/nevertheless_catalog, and one(1) other art work among the works below and make some connection between them. Create an academic argument. What do you think and why does it matter?

Among the works:

We Real Cool (Gwendolyn Brooks),

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/poems/28112/we-real-cool>

The Revenant (Billy Collins)

<https://thehefner.dreamwidth.org/247897.html>

4-5 pages (1000-1250 words). Please cite every art work reference. No outside source is accepted, please use only sources in this instruction.

Structure

1. Choose a work.
 2. Note your first impression.
 3. Try not to judge.
 4. Notice details.
 5. Ask yourself: what's going on?
 6. Write: what makes you think that?
- Think about tone, purpose, audience, possible historical context.

What piece moves YOU, and why?

Example: I'm very moved by "Brothers Going to Church", p. 24. My first impression is that the boys are very connected to each other, wearing Sunday clothes, and yet not on a church. Their shadows indicate the sun is before them, so it's morning. And as they are children, it is of course the morning of their lives. The road is behind them. So perhaps after this photo, they might turn around and take the road forward as the sun moves through the metaphorical sky. The road also has a fork, indicating choices. As they now stand, the shadow between the brothers is connected --- perhaps some extension of their brotherhood as they become men. There is an overall sense of time ahead of them, a beginning of something. Why else would the road be so prominent? And they are pivoted outward, perhaps to the lives ahead of them, and in some protection of each other. So I guess my questions are: where's the church? Was this taken from the steps of the church? The little guy is wearing a carnation (special occasion?) and seems relaxed (or defeated?) and sad; the big brother seems focused and upset. What are they praying for before they get into Church? Is this a regular church service -- or has something happened? Have they lost someone?