

FINAL WRITTEN RESPONSE
On Cognitive Biases

Reading Elizabeth Kolbert, “Why Facts Don’t Change our Minds”

Format Typed

There’s no specific length requirement. You just want to make sure to address each of the following five points:

1. First, state how Kolbert defines “confirmation bias” (roughly, p. 4). On that point, state your understanding of what she means by that definition: what’s the basic idea?
2. Find and report on at least one other source’s articulation of what confirmation bias is. Make sure to state your source.
3. After defining confirmation bias, Kolbert reports on a relevant Stanford study having to do with opinions about the deterrent effects of capital punishment. Describe that Stanford study Kolbert reports on (again, roughly p. 4).
4. Now explain how you think that Stanford study shows the presence of confirmation bias in the students.
5. Why do you think the students responded the way they did?
6. Finally, in your experience, do you think that people engage in confirmation bias much? What would be your example of when people accept information that supports what they already believe but ignore clear evidence against their preexisting belief?