

Essay #1: On Thinking

Basic Requirements:

- Final submission due date: _____
- Value: 110 points
- Format: MLA (see manuscript requirements on Canvas or OWL at Purdue)
- Minimum Required Length: 4-5 MLA formatted pages
- Include an MLA formatted list of works cited for all of the sources cited in your essay.

Reflection (in preparation of forming your essay's exigence: issue and its importance):

Determine what it means to think, in particular, think critically. Explain what it means to develop insight, and what role that perception plays in understanding the world. Weigh the value in modern times of the necessity to think critically. Identify from where people learn, are expected to learn, and do learn to think—and where they do not learn to think. Consider what motivates people to learn to think. Posit the problems related to the realization and application of critical thinking in life.

Directions: Develop an expository analysis advancing your main assertion on the definition, acquisition, and role of critical thinking.

(An expository analysis is a detailed, thoughtful, but decided explanation of an issue.)

In the essay's introduction, use a related and interesting attention-catching hook. Then briefly stipulate your own explanation of what is *critical thinking*. Conclude the introductory paragraph with your main assertion on the significance and practice of critical thinking. Throughout your introduction—and the entire essay—always consider for whom you are writing and why you are trying to tell this audience your perspective of thinking.

In the next section of your essay, reason in more detail the definition of critical thinking and its importance. Consider situations—small and large—when people use critical thinking.

Continue with a section discussing the ways by which people acquire and do not acquire critical thinking.

In a following section assert the ramifications for when people do and do not use critical thinking.

After analyzing these effects, provide exercises and demonstrations by which people can assume more command over critical thinking.

In your essay, try to limit your discussion of critical thinking to a certain context, like in learning, in personal relationships, in understanding current events, etc. Support your

ideas with your own reasoning and examples and with evidence from at least one of the class readings. Responsibly and accurately cite your source use in MLA citation format; refer to examples on Canvas and OWL at Purdue.

Class Sources

- Diana Kendall's essay "Framing Class, Vicarious Living, and Conspicuous Consumption"
- Plato's dialogue recording of Socrates' lesson to Glaucon in "The Allegory of the Cave"
- The Zen Parables "Muddy Road", "A Parable", and "Learning to Be Silent"
- John Taylor Gatto's essay "Against School"
- Annie Dillard's essay "Sight into Insight"

Maintain your authority! Begin the paragraphs with *your own* ideas. Develop *your own* reasoning and *your own* examples for why these are valid points. Create original specific examples, not just from the sources. However, also integrate the data from the sources into your discussion to back up your already asserted and established ideas. Then analyze any data and examples to connect back to *your point*.

Build a logically progressive discussion of your thesis in consideration of your audience and purpose. Use an effective tone by considering your audience's sensibilities and concerns and the purpose for why you are asserting your main point (thesis). Your tone is created by what you say and how you say it.

Cite your sources in your essay and develop a works cited page at the end of your paper using MLA source documentation format. Use formal TAGs and provide author credentials for each source. (See Canvas and OWL at Purdue Web site for the MLA documentation guide for citing sources—accuracy is crucial.)

Consider your tone: use an objective tone; write for the public not for yourself. Also, avoid using second person, first person plural, slang and colloquial expressions, contractions, and flat words so that your ideas are clear and understandable. Rely on your knowledge of vocabulary, and use a thesaurus to exercise definitions to fit the exact ideas that you try to convey.