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The Write Path

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2021

The Write Path, Best of First-Fourth Editions

Xavier University (Cincinnati, Ohio)

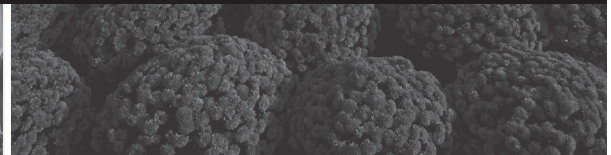
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Best of First-Fourth Editions

The Write Path

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program



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The Write Path

First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier
Produced by the Xavier Writing Program
Best of First–Fourth Editions

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In loving memory of Don Prues—colleague, teacher, friend.

Welcome!

As first year writers at Xavier, you may have questions or concerns about writing in your college courses. You may love to write and be excited about the new forms of composing you will learn in college or in your major, or you may feel intimidated and uncertain about what to expect. This book is designed to give you more information about writing in college and offer some examples of what successful college-level writing looks like, straight from Xavier students themselves. Also, by beginning college in 2020, you may have additional concerns about online teaching, how to access your courses online, or what writing in college might look like if learning moved to remote access. These concerns and more will be addressed in this edition of *The Write Path*, so in the event that learning would move to online access, you would be ready for that as well.

In the first section of this book, you will find information about terms, ideas, and practices that will help you succeed with college-level writing and orient you to practices, policies, and resources for writing here at Xavier. As you read, you may find that you have heard some of this information before, though some of it may be entirely new. Words such as *rough draft*, *peer response*, and *rhetorical appeals* are likely to play a big part in your writing process in college, so being familiar with the meanings of these words can help you find your way in your writing courses. Additionally, this text will cover issues of academic honesty, plagiarism, and how to properly cite sources in research-based writing so that you can create quality work that acknowledges information you have learned from outside sources. Resources such as the Writing Center and Library will also be explained so that you know where to turn when you need additional support and information for your writing.

In the second section, you can read selected essays from first-year students at Xavier who, like you, were recently in ENGL 101 or ENGL 115 working on similar assignments. Looking through their work, you can see what type of writing is expected so that you can better understand the genres you will be asked to write in your first-year writing courses. You may have seen some of these before—such as a research-based argument—but you will be prompted to examine the writing more deeply with questions at the end so that you can more fully appreciate the “how” and “what” of research writing. Other genres—such as the rhetorical analysis or narrative arguments—may be less familiar, and seeing examples can give you an idea of what to expect from these assignments. These examples are not meant to be copied, nor do they represent a rigid set of expectations for an assignment, but rather, offer a model of one way that this type of writing can be successfully crafted. Additionally, this particular issue of *The Write Path* is a “best of” compilation that will feature the most exemplary work that was published in editions one through four. This special issue will showcase student writing over the past few years that was especially successful, demonstrating how various first-year writers approached assignments in their ENGL 101 and ENGL 115 classes.

As you write papers in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, be on the lookout for papers you wrote particularly well, and consider submitting them for consideration for the D’Artagnan Award and next year’s *Write Path* publication. By

Welcome to The Write Path

submitting your work, you can support and encourage students who, like you, will be first-year college writers next year. What you learn now can benefit your fellow students in the future, so please pass along your wisdom and work.

Everyone arrives at college with different backgrounds, experiences, and types of education. This book has been created to help put you on the “write path” in your first year as a Xavier student and to answer questions you may have about writing in college. Also, if there is anything that would have benefited you that was not included in this book, please let me know so that we can consider including it next year.

Good luck in your first-year writing classes!

Sincerely,

Dr. Renea Frey

Writing Program Director

Introduction to The Write Path

College Writing—What Makes It Different?

Nearly everyone does some sort of writing in high school, but what kind and how much work you do may vary greatly. In your first year of college, one of the educational goals is to give all students a solid, common foundation in particular subjects, including writing, which can help you for the rest of the time you are at Xavier.

A common genre that students often learn in high school is the five-paragraph essay. While many of the conventions for this type of writing may transfer to college writing, you will also be expected to move beyond the five-paragraph essay to write increasingly complex, longer assignments. In many cases, you will be building upon writing skills you have already learned in high school and expanding them to fulfill new, more in-depth writing prompts.

For instance, you will still need to make strong, focused thesis statements that give the reader an overview of the claims you will be making in your work, and then organize the rest of your paper around supporting that claim with evidence. In most cases, you will also include elements like topic sentences that announce the content of a paragraph and transitions that allow the reader to easily follow your thought process. You should have a strong conclusion that gives the reader a “call to action” or explains the larger implications of your work or clarifies why thinking about this issue or text in this way matters. While many of these conventions may be similar to what you have done in high school, it is likely that your instructors in college will ask for greater detail, more depth, additional outside sources, and longer length papers than you typically worked on in high school.

Some other differences in college writing include the following:

- The type of evidence that “counts” in some assignments may include peer-reviewed scholarly sources which are written by and for academics in specific disciplines. These pieces may be longer than popular articles, include more field-specific jargon, and be challenging to interpret for those who are new to a discipline.
- You will likely need to offer multiple perspectives in your work, including counter-arguments to your position or refutations of competing perspectives. It is not enough to only argue *your* side—you need to view and fairly represent issues from multiple positions.
- In some cases, you may be asked to write from a formal third-person perspective, but in other cases, such as narratives or autoethnographies, you may have to write in first-person, beginning your thoughts with “I.”
- You will likely write for different audiences, some of which may be a community of scholars; other times, you may be writing for the public.
- Different disciplines have different conventions, citation systems (e.g., MLA, Chicago, or APA), and expectations. As you write for different courses from across the university, you will find that writing varies between disciplines and that what counts as “good writing” may vary in each class.

- How you conduct research, integrate quotes, and cite sources in your work may be more rigorous than what was expected in high school. As you enter college-level work, you become a part of a community of scholars who have high standards for academic integrity and attribution for work and ideas. (More on this topic later)

Even if you found writing in high school easy, the writing (and thinking) you will do in college will expand your previous skills. In addition, you will be writing for new audiences, about novel topics, and be asked to engage in assignments that will likely push beyond the work you did in high school. This learning can be both challenging and exciting, and the work you do in your first-year writing courses serves as a foundation for the writing you will create during your entire time at Xavier.

Process Writing

How many of us have waited to start a writing assignment until the night before, and then frantically written all night, quickly proofread the paper once or twice, and then turned it in at the last minute? While this may succeed in “getting the work done,” few people (despite the claims every instructor hears) actually produce their best work under these circumstances.

A common practice in ENGL 101 and 115 courses will be to engage in process-based writing. In this approach, instead of writing assignments where you write on your own, turn in your writing, and then receive a grade, you will work on your writing gradually, in stages, with feedback from peers and/or your instructor at multiple points along the way. In many of your other courses, you will still be asked to create writing where the final *product* is what counts, but in your first-year writing courses, we will also focus on the *process*.

Some of you may already be familiar with peer review—sharing your work with classmates to receive feedback and suggestions for revision—but in first-year writing, this may be more directed and involve particular practices, such as reading out loud, filling out a worksheet based upon the writing you read, or writing a reflection about what you changed in response to your peer’s suggestions. In addition, you may receive feedback from your instructor at various points in your composing process, or be asked to submit a proposal, outline, or research plan for your projects. By focusing on the process, your instructor can guide you as you draft, review, revise, redraft, and revise your papers again.

A process-based approach to writing may include all or some of the following steps:

- Invention work, including brainstorming, heuristics, listing, free-writing, or other exercises to start your thinking about a topic
- Proposals or research plans that ask for details about what, how, and when you intend to create a project
- Annotated bibliographies which require you to document, summarize, and analyze the sources you are exploring for your research

- Exploratory Essays (sometimes called Synthesis Essays) may be assigned which will ask you to discuss all of the sources you have examined for your research, and reflect upon how what you have learned informs your thinking about your topic
- Outlines or zero drafts where you begin the initial stages of your paper but have not yet composed a full copy
- Rough or first drafts that include all of your completed ideas but that are not yet in the “polished” stage of drafting
- Final or polished drafts that represent your best work which has been revised, edited, and proofread after receiving input from peers, your instructor, and/or the Writing Center
- Reflections on your writing process, revisions, or finished work

Throughout this process, your instructor may choose various places to intervene, read your current work, and offer feedback or direction. Your peers, too, may be a part of this process, in both formal peer reviews and informal discussions in class. Unlike many of your other courses, your instructor may give you points along the way for different stages of drafting—your finished paper may not be the only writing that “counts” toward your grade.

For many reasons, it is important to keep up with this process as it is outlined in your class schedule. First, it may affect the grade you receive on the overall assignment, especially if various drafts have point values assigned to them. Second, in a course that utilizes peer review, it is important that everyone have a draft to share so that participation is fair and possible. Third, by receiving feedback along the way, you can be more confident that you are fulfilling the assignment correctly and change course sooner if you find that you are not. Lastly, composing your work in steps, even if it is unfamiliar to you, will give you new, valuable skills that you can use in other courses.

Though many students can get into the habit of writing their entire paper quickly the night before, to succeed in college-level writing, it is imperative to take more time planning, drafting, and revising your work. Even the very best writers who are accustomed to receiving A's for their work can benefit from feedback and revision. Additionally, as you progress in your college education, you will encounter assignments that simply cannot be completed in one or two sittings. In order to produce your best work, as well as reduce needless stress, it is important to get into the habit of working on writing assignments in stages, over time.

When we “re-*vis*e,” we are actually “re-*vision*ing” or “re-*see*ing” our work with fresh eyes. If writing assignments are put off until the last minute, there simply is no time to do this, nor is there space to receive feedback, visit the Writing Center, or read work out loud in order to catch errors in wording.

For these reasons, your first-year writing courses will engage writing as process in some manner. This may be a new approach, or it may simply expand your past experiences. Either way, learning to see writing as an ongoing process will save you time, stress, and disappointment in the long run, and support your work in other courses. ENGL 101 and 115 encourage a foundation for best practices in writing that will serve you throughout your college career and beyond.

Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory

You have likely heard the word “rhetoric” many times in your life, often in a derogatory manner that implies “merely words” or words without honesty or substance. Rhetoric, which will be addressed in both ENGL 101 and 115, is actually the art of speaking and writing effectively that dates back at least as far as ancient Athens in the Western tradition. Aristotle described rhetoric as “the faculty of discovering in any particular case all of the available means of persuasion” and this definition, or similar ones offered by Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, and others, points to the study of rhetoric as the analysis and use of words to persuade an audience.

The ability to persuade effectively has implications for the use of that power, so some rhetoricians also address the idea of *ethics* within or alongside rhetoric. In the Jesuit educational system, there is a tradition called *eloquentia perfecta*, which is speaking (or writing) well for the greater good. As you study, analyze, and effectively use rhetoric, keep in mind that rhetoric, like many tools, can be utilized in both ethical and unethical ways. As you build knowledge and become more aware of rhetoric in the world around you, recall the practices of *reflection* and *discernment* that are also part of the Jesuit tradition—when you make choices about using your rhetorical skills, remember that rhetoric can serve the greater good or merely be self-serving.

Though we may not be aware of it, we use and encounter rhetoric all the time in our daily lives. You might engage rhetorical means when you try to persuade your roommate to pick up her dirty socks, or convince your parents to support a trip abroad, or write a cover letter to apply for a new job or internship. In each of these situations, you use persuasion to try to convince an audience of your perspective. Conversely, you also encounter rhetoric everyday in magazine or online ads, opinion pieces in the school newspaper, or political speeches on television or the Internet. Even memes, by using stock images and brief lines of text, provide short arguments that make a claim and try to convince the viewer of a particular perspective.

Because we use and encounter rhetoric so often in our everyday lives, it is important to understand how it operates in order to use it effectively and ethically. It is also crucial to recognize how rhetoric works on *you* in your daily encounters with texts, people, and ideas. With knowledge of how rhetorical appeals work, you will be able to engage the world around you with greater discernment, which will allow you to make more informed choices about the arguments you regularly witness.

Rhetorical Terms and Appeals

In ENGL 101 and 115 you will likely learn about *rhetorical appeals*, or the specific ways that people are generally persuaded. There are three main appeals:

- *Ethos*: The character or authority of the speaker/writer, which includes the reasons you might trust what a particular person says, either because of her virtues or knowledge. Audiences are not persuaded by speakers they do not trust.

- *Logos*: This is the logic or reason behind an argument that appeals to our rationality. An argument has to make sense and be backed with evidence in order for it to be accepted by an audience.
- *Pathos*: The emotions we feel when faced with a situation can also affect our choices and beliefs. We may be moved by compassion or fear to take a certain action for a social cause, or may feel joy and fulfillment when we are convinced to spend the weekend on vacation with friends.

Ideally, all of these appeals will work together in well-constructed, logical arguments that speak to our values and are presented to us by ethical, knowledgeable people. As you can imagine though, this is not always the case, which is why it is so important to discern and identify rhetorical appeals in our everyday lives.

Other terms you may hear in your studies of rhetoric include:

- *Audience*: All rhetorical acts engage a rhetor and an audience to whom the rhetor speaks or writes. You already tailor your messages depending upon your audience whether you are aware of it or not. When writing rhetorically, you will make more conscious choices about wording, style, or method of delivery in order to reach your audience most effectively.
- *Purpose*: All communication has a distinct and specific purpose. Do you want your audience to take a particular action? Or believe a new idea? Knowing what you want to accomplish with your writing will help you craft more effective texts.
- *Kairos*: This refers to the timing of a rhetorical text—what is relevant today may no longer make sense three months from now. A rhetorically effective text will take into account the timing of events and will arise at the proper moment.
- *Exigence*: Rhetorical texts respond to stimuli or events and may pose a potential solution to a problem. The exigence is a state that demands attention, and the rhetorical text is what arises in response to it.
- *The Five Canons of Rhetoric*
 1. *Invention*: Pre-writing work such as brainstorming, heuristics, listing, etc., that allows you to “discover” your argument
 2. *Arrangement*: Putting together your argument in a logical, effective way that your audience can easily follow
 3. *Style*: May include the wording, tone, or appearance appropriate for your text, audience, and purpose
 4. *Memory*: In classical rhetoric, this refers to memorizing a speech, but today it can indicate referencing citations, digital memory, or public/cultural memory that influences rhetorical texts
 5. *Delivery*: For classic oratory, this might include gestures or tone of voice, but in written texts may refer to the way writing is presented on a page, digital delivery, or forms such as video or podcasts

Knowing these terms and understanding their application will give you a vocabulary to analyze, think, and write about the way rhetoric works. In ENGL 101 and 115, you will likely conduct a *rhetorical analysis* at some point,

which will ask you to examine a text and analyze its rhetorical components. You may also be asked to consciously utilize rhetorical appeals in your own writing as a means of creating more effective arguments. These may be new genres of writing and examples of effective rhetorical analyses, and rhetorically grounded arguments will be offered later in this book.

Though you may not have realized it, you are already surrounded by rhetoric and confront rhetorical appeals everyday. By understanding how rhetoric operates, you will be able to identify the persuasive tactics you encounter in order to make more informed choices *and* to interrogate your own use of rhetoric to ensure that your rhetorical skills are used in a way that serves your values.

Research, Citation, and Academic Honesty

In college, you will be asked to write research papers in many of your classes. In ENGL 101 and 115, you will learn about the conventions of research and citation as part of your course work. Again, some of this may be review, but many students find that college-level research writing entails more careful documentation than their high school writing required.

Research can be viewed as an ongoing conversation between multiple parties within and across disciplines. As new ideas are discovered, academics write up their findings and publish them in scholarly journals, where they are reviewed by their peers. When you read scholarly articles, you are “listening” to those conversations, and when you write research papers, you are “joining” that conversation by synthesizing information and applying it to your own interests.

One way that you can start to understand and analyze this scholarly conversation more thoroughly is through creating an Annotated Bibliography as part of your research work. Although what is expected for this assignment will vary depending upon the course, discipline, parameters of the upcoming paper you may write, concepts covered in class, or the preferences of your professor, all annotated bibliographies serve the purpose of both *summarizing* and *analyzing* the specific sources you are exploring in your research process. In addition to demonstrating to your professor that you are actively engaging with research on your topic, creating an annotated bibliography also allows you to contemplate sources more deeply, analyze their position or content, and consider how each source contributes to the work you are doing yourself. This thinking and writing process can be very beneficial to you as you conduct research, allowing you to pause and think critically about each source that you examine prior to using it in a research paper or other assignment.

For an Annotated Bibliography like this, you would list each source alphabetically by author in proper citation format (MLA 8th edition for English classes, but check with your professor if you are unsure or if you are working on an assignment in a different discipline), and then provide the annotation—a summary and analysis of the source—underneath the entry. If you receive an Annotated Bibliography as an assignment, be sure to check with your professor about what he or she expects to see in each entry and how it should be

formatted, as this can vary greatly depending upon the course. Remember, too, that you can take this assignment to the Writing Center for additional feedback or help with citation methods.

Because scholarly writing depends so much on the ongoing research “conversation,” the academic community has very high standards for crediting and citing research that others have conducted. While standards for citing and incorporating sources into your own work may vary in high school, once you are in college, there are particular rules that you must follow in order to keep your writing and research practices ethical.

In college, you will likely be asked to integrate outside research with your own ideas. When you do this, you may make claims or express ideas that are yours, and then back them up with evidence that comes from outside sources. This is a more complicated process than, say, writing a research report that summarizes the ideas of someone else, or an opinion paper that simply expresses your own position. In college writing, you will often be asked to integrate both of these practices into a more complex written argument.

When you utilize research conducted by others, it is important to always attribute those ideas to their sources. There are a variety of ways that you might incorporate outside sources into your work including:

- *Quote*: A short passage that is written out word for word exactly as the original author stated it
- *Paraphrase*: A segment of someone else’s work that you have put into your own words
- *Summary*: Condensing the overall idea of a work into a much shorter format in your own words

To maintain academic honesty, you must cite the sources you use in all three of these cases.

Citing a source typically includes in-text citations inside of parentheses at the end of the sentence where the outside source is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. For MLA format, which you will use in most of your English classes, this will include the author’s last name and the page number of the article or book where you found the information. Your papers should always include a Works Cited page where you list all of the sources you used for your paper, arranged alphabetically by the author’s last name; this should also include important publishing information, which will be covered in your class or found in an MLA 8th edition style guide.

Please note that as of March 2016, MLA has moved to 8th edition style guidelines, so the information in your textbook may not be updated if you are using an edition published prior to that time. You may need to consult an online database such as Purdue Owl, or purchase an MLA update supplement for your textbook.

Your ENGL 101 or 115 instructor will go over proper citation formats in class for different types of documents, but the first and most important step is to remember that you *must cite these sources*, even if you do not quote them directly. Although you may lose points for formatting a citation incorrectly or

need to revise if you've made a mistake, citing outside work in the first place will allow you to avoid charges of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, which are much more serious.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism can be defined as using someone else's words or ideas without properly identifying the source. Plagiarism can carry dire consequences for students who engage in it, including failing grades for the assignment or course and in some cases, suspension.¹ Here are some basic types of plagiarism that can compromise a student's academic integrity:

- *Intentional Misrepresentation*: This occurs when a student deliberately attempts to present another's work as his or her own. This can include copying or paraphrasing someone else's writing without attributing the source, buying a paper online, or having someone else write the paper.
- *Self-Plagiarism*: This type of misrepresentation happens when a student "recycles" a paper written previously for another class or context. In some cases, you may want to continue research that you have conducted for another class or project, but *you may not use any writing that you have already turned in* for a grade. If you decide to further previous research, it is best to check with your instructor and be totally honest about what you are doing so that your motives and writing process are completely transparent.
- *Unintentional Misrepresentation*: When a student is not familiar with community citation standards or that these standards may be different from what he or she did in high school, it is possible to plagiarize due to uncertainty or lack of knowledge. When in doubt, cite your sources.
- *Patchwriting*: Rebecca Moore Howard (1993) defines "patchwriting" as "copying from a source text and then deleting some words, altering grammatical structures, or plugging in one-for-one synonym-substitutes." This type of plagiarism is not always the result of dishonesty; sometimes it occurs because students are not familiar with the ideas or language they are attempting to incorporate. Nevertheless, it is still considered plagiarism *even if the sources are cited*.
- *Excessive Quotation*: Even if you cite your sources, you cannot cobble together a paper based mostly upon the words or ideas of others. When you use long quotes, do so sparingly and only when the author has stated an idea in such a way that it warrants the in-depth use of another's specific words. (Also check MLA citation guidelines, as long quotes require block formatting that is different from short quotes.) Be wary, however, about using multiple sets of long quotes as this may border on plagiarism, even if you cite the sources. When you write papers in college, the bulk of the words and ideas should be your own.

¹ For more information about the penalties for academic dishonesty, see: <http://www.xavier.edu/library/xu-tutor/Xaviers-Policy-on-Academic-Honesty.cfm>

In some cases, you may not need to cite a source. For instance, when referring to your own personal experiences or thoughts, original research you have conducted yourself, or when you use common knowledge or widely accepted facts, a source is not necessary. What constitutes “common knowledge” may vary widely but is generally considered to be a fact that is easily accessible and consistent across many sources (e.g. the Declaration of Independence was ratified in 1776). However, if you are not sure if your information is considered common knowledge, *cite the source*.

Integrating sources correctly into your own work will also help you to avoid plagiarism, as doing so allows you to clearly show in your writing which ideas are your own and which ideas come from others. Although you may understand how a source supports or more fully clarifies your own work, it is important to explicitly explain that to your audience. Framing outside information will make your work more effective and also help you avoid accidental plagiarism:

- *Introduce* the integrated work with a short sentence or phrase that contextualizes the information for your reader.
- *Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize* the work, including proper in-text documentation per citation style and then including all sources used in your Works Cited page.
- *Comment* on the work and how it relates to the argument or information you are presenting. This will help your reader understand how you interpret the work you are citing and its relationship to your own ideas.

Learning to effectively and ethically integrate research into your own writing is a key component of what you will learn in ENGL 101 and 115—skills that will also support your success in other classes throughout your time as a student. While other disciplines may use different citation styles (such as APA or Chicago), all disciplines value honest, ethical research practices and eschew anything that could be construed as plagiarism or misappropriation of another’s work. For these reasons, it is very important that you learn and understand the research and citation methods expected of you in college, as the consequences for not following these community standards can be dire with long-term effects on your academic career.

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

Your instructor will have a clearly stated plagiarism policy in your ENGL 101 or 115 syllabus, and you should understand thoroughly the possible ramifications for not properly attributing your sources. Plagiarism often occurs when a student is pressed for time or overwhelmed by an assignment; sometimes, an otherwise honest student may make unfortunate choices in high pressure situations that lead to more work, trouble, and upset than taking the time to do the work honestly. If you find yourself in a situation where you are stuck or afraid that you cannot complete the work on time, talk to your instructor, or take your assignment prompt to the Writing Center for help or clarification. Even requesting an extension or having points docked for turning in a paper late are much less severe than a charge of plagiarism.

Students can mistakenly believe that their instructors will not know if they have plagiarized or copied a paper—in full or in part—from another source, but this is rarely the case. Software such as Turnitin catches many cases of plagiarism, and instructors generally know the writing styles of their students. With Internet technology, it is very easy for instructors to search for key terms in their students' work to see if a paper has been plagiarized or recycled from another source. Even under situations of stress, it is never a good idea to turn in work that is not fully your own—an honestly but poorly written draft can be corrected and recovered from, whereas an academic dishonesty charge will follow you throughout your college career.

Xavier's Academic Honesty Policy states the following:

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation.

All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.



Please note that not only are there immediate consequences for academic dishonesty (including a zero for the assignment, an "F" for the course, or expulsion from the University), but also that this action will be reported to the Dean's office of the college in which you are enrolled, and that a record of this action will be recorded. While the ramifications for *any* instance of academic dishonesty are definitely not worth the risk, in the case of a second or repeated offense, the consequences are typically much more severe.

In all cases, academic honesty and integrity are always the "write path" to take. Citing your sources clearly and integrating them effectively into your own work will make you a better writer *and* help ensure your acceptance into a community of scholars.

Resources for Students

Xavier University McDonald Memorial Library

We often think of the library as a place to go to find books, but the library actually offers many more services that will be of use to you as you research various projects. In addition to the books housed in the library, you can also use OhioLINK or Inter-Library Loan (ILL) to check out any book available in libraries across the state or country. This gives you access to many more books than could be contained in a single building on campus. Keep in mind, though, that these services may take a few days to process your request and get the book to Xavier for you to pick up, so always start your research process early.

In addition to traditional print books, the library offers services to connect Xavier students to a variety of journals, media, and other resources. By using Search @ XU and the research databases, you can easily access thousands of resources, including scholarly journal articles. In ENGL 101 or 115, your class may take a trip to the library, or a librarian may come to your class to talk with you about how to search the databases and find the information you need. In an online course or remote learning environment, a librarian may videoconference with your class or you individually to provide research help. You can also drop by the library, connect via chat, or email the librarians to ask questions or to seek help if you are having trouble finding information.

The library has a makerspace on the first floor, right as you come in the main entrance from the Academic Mall. The makerspace is open to all students to explore, design, create, build, and collaborate using technologies such as 3D printing and 3D scanning, robotics, circuitry, programming, a laser etcher, tools, crafts, and more.

In addition to the library services, you can also use the Conaton Learning Commons (connected to the library building) as a place to study or meet with classmates to work on group projects. There are 14 group study rooms in the CLC with capacities that range from two or three people, up to 10 people. Many of these rooms are equipped with white boards or plasma screen projectors with web access, so you can easily share your work and collaborate in these spaces. There are also two small computing labs with access to photocopiers, printers, scanners, and computer workstations. Other student support services in the Conaton Learning Commons include Disability Services, Math Lab, Writing Center, Language Resource Center, Academic Advising, and Digital Media Lab. All of these services are here for you to use and can help support your writing and research in a variety of courses.

For more information and to get started with your research, visit the library's website at www.xavier.edu/library.

James A. Glenn Writing Center

The Writing Center is another important resource for students at Xavier to help them develop writing skills and to support them with writing assignments in various classes. Located in the CLC 400 (overlooking the circulation desk), the Writing Center offers peer tutoring help with writing during any part of the

drafting process. While this is a great place to come if you want someone else to look over your paper once you have a rough draft, the Writing Center tutors can also help you understand an assignment more fully before you start drafting, work with brainstorming ideas, give assistance organizing a paper, offer direction if you are halfway through an essay and get stuck, or provide information about documenting sources. At any stage of the drafting process, the Writing Center is an invaluable asset for students working on writing.

If you use the Writing Center, it is best to make an appointment in advance by calling (513-745-2875) since there may or may not be a tutor available if you just walk in. While the majority of most students go to the Writing Center in person, sessions can also be conducted via Zoom or email at writingcenter@xavier.edu. In the event of remote learning semesters, the Center will provide all sessions online.

When you go, be prepared with your assignment prompt and name of the class and professor, as well as any notes, texts that your writing refers to, and drafts or outlines you have already done. Think about areas where you need the most help with the assignment and have questions ready to ask the tutor, as this will allow you to make the best use of your time. It is optimal to plan to go to the Writing Center a few days before an assignment is due so that you have time to make revisions, or even do additional research before turning in work for your class. Sessions last about fifty minutes and the Writing Center is open a variety of hours (including Sundays) so that it is possible to find time in your schedule to make an appointment.

Some students mistakenly believe that the Writing Center is only used by people who struggle with writing or who are “bad” writers. The truth is, no matter how skilled a writer you are, receiving feedback on what you have written can improve the overall quality of the work you turn in. Everyone benefits from having reviews of their writing, and almost all writing can be developed more fully. The Writing Center is a key support service for success in ENGL 101 and 115, as well as other courses and projects that require writing. Be sure to utilize this resource while you are at Xavier.

Online Access

In most of your first-year writing classes, instructors will make use of an online Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas, which you can access through various devices, whether you are on campus or off. While instructors may use the services provided in Canvas differently, you should be able to find many of your learning materials in this online interface, including the syllabus, assignments, links, readings, and course policies. Your instructors may provide you with these materials in class and/or in hardcopy formats, too, so be sure to check with your instructor about how Canvas is used in your particular class.

In the event that courses are moved online, such as during a health crisis or other emergency, instructors will move all learning to the Canvas interface. Canvas provides an easy way for students and instructors to access course materials and assignments, turn in work, have text-based class discussions, or

meet virtually in video conferences via the Zoom interface. Your instructor may choose to use some or all of these tools even when meeting face-to-face on campus, but if classes would ever need to move to remote access, be assured that your instructors understand how to interact with students and teach class online if necessary.

You can find more help with Canvas at this link on Xavier's site, including information on the computer specifications to run Canvas: <https://www.xavier.edu/ts/students/canvas-for-students-9914>

Some Words About Success

In your first year at Xavier, you will be building the skills you need to succeed in your classes, as well as your life beyond the university. The writing you will practice in your ENGL 101 and 115 courses is a part of that skillset, but it does not exist in isolation. Part of success in writing—or college, or life in general—is planning your time wisely so that you are able to meet all of your commitments without being overwhelmed or stressed in the process. It may be a change for you to have to plan so many activities, assignments, and classes yourself, but learning to do so effectively will ensure that you are able to be successful in your courses.

Learning to write well takes practice, which is why we promote a process-based approach to writing. You may find writing more challenging in college than you did in high school, but as with learning any new skill, you will find that you develop efficacy the more you practice. Be sure to give yourself enough time to work on your writing assignments, even in courses where the process itself is not emphasized as much as it is in ENGL 101 or 115. Brainstorm, jot down outlines, take good notes on your research, write rough drafts, and visit the Writing Center. All of these practices will not only increase the likelihood of achieving higher grades on your papers, but also develop the skills you need to write well in all areas of your life.

Remember though, as with any skill, writing capability is acquired over time and with repeated practice. While feedback from peers, your professor, or a peer tutor can aid in developing your skills as a writer, these practices do not automatically guarantee that you will get the highest grade possible on an assignment. All students build competency over time, and peers, professors, and tutors can only address a few issues at once. Be patient with the process and engage all of the resources available to you at Xavier to ensure that you reach the highest level of writing success you can during your time in college.

Student Work

How to Use This Text

In the upcoming pages, you will find examples of student work from first year students who, just like you, took ENGL 101 and/or 115. These examples can be used in a variety of ways and are here to support the writing that you will do in your first year at Xavier. In this particular issue of *The Write Path*, you will find essays collected from the past four editions that feature the “best of” selections from previous years.

One way that these student essays can help you is to illustrate what the different genres of writing you may encounter in ENGL 101 and 115 look like. It can be hard to craft a particular kind of writing, such as a rhetorical analysis or ethnography, if you have no idea what these genres are or should include. By looking at an example paper, you can see what typically goes into writing this type of paper, as well as observe how this can be done particularly well.

These papers do not serve as a rigid template for you to copy. Rather, you should use these texts as models for what to expect in a particular genre of writing, what you should include, what “works” about a piece of writing, and then consider how you can adapt or include those skills in your own work. By “stepping back” from a text and asking questions about how it is composed, you can analyze not only the content, but also the rhetorical and compositional strategies that are employed in creating that piece of writing.

To guide you through reading these examples, each paper will be foregrounded by a reflection from the students themselves, discussing their writing process for that paper. You can see through their words what challenges, obstacles, strategies, and steps they took to get to the finished piece of writing that is published in this book. As readers, we often only get to see the product of a writer’s efforts, but in this text, you will also gain insight about the process that led to these essays. By reading these reflections by students, you might find that you relate to some of their struggles, or learn an important tip that could help you with your own writing.

After the reflection, you will find the essay itself followed by a short series of questions. These questions ask you to look more deeply at the writing itself to ascertain what you think the writer was doing or intending at different points along the way. How does this writer transition from one idea to the next? What kinds of sources does this writer use as support for her argument? How are quotes integrated into this argument? These are the kinds of questions that may be presented after the essay itself for you to consider and/or for your instructor to use in class to prompt discussion about the writing process.

By examining the writing of other students who were working under similar conditions, you can seek guidance and encouragement for your own work in first-year composition and rhetoric courses at Xavier. Additionally, by analyzing the writing process in this way, you can learn more about the way that you write. How do *you* transition between ideas? Support your claims? Or integrate quotes? By getting into the habit of analyzing writing itself, rather than only its

content, you gain *meta-cognitive awareness* of your own writing process. By understanding how writing happens, you can acquire insight about what you do, how you do it, and why.

This knowledge can allow you to make more conscious choices and utilize the Jesuit principles of *reflection* and *discernment*. Through reflection on your writing, you can learn more about yourself as a writer and communicator, and then make more discerning choices about those practices. As you develop your skills as a writer in your first-year courses, you will build the foundation of your future academic success, as well as establish tools with which to participate in your communities, careers, and civic lives. This text is designed to assist you in those endeavors and to serve as a guide for your first year as a college writer.

The D'Artagnan Award

The essays that you find in this book all come from entries for the D'Artagnan Award, an annual award co-sponsored by Xavier's Writing Program, the Dean's office, and the Writing Center. Each year, students are encouraged to submit their best work from ENGL 101 and 115 for this award. The submitted essays can be written in any genre, and the top three winners, along with a selection of other exemplary student work, will be published in *The Write Path: First Year Composition and Rhetoric at Xavier* for the following year. For this particular issue, we have selected the "best of" the previous four editions as a celebration of student writing in the first few issues of *The Write Path*, including the D'Artagnan Award winners from each year.

The name for this award was chosen specifically because D'Artagnan, like our first-year writers, had to work hard to improve his skills, overcome obstacles, and rise to the challenge of new situations that require maturity and development. First-year students who win this award become leaders for future students, as their work will become a tool to guide new first-year writers on their educational journey.

As you use this text this year and develop your writing skills in ENGL 101 and 115, please consider submitting your favorite pieces for next year's D'Artagnan Award. You can learn more about this award and submit work anytime throughout the year at <https://www.xavier.edu/english-department/dartagnan-award/index>.

Category: Research-Based Argument

Research-based arguments are a staple of college writing. In many of your classes, you will be asked to conduct research into a topic, form a position, and then compose a formal argument that weaves together reliable evidence that you have gathered together with your own ideas. The following essays were all D'Artagnan Award first-place winners from previous editions of *The Write Path* and each of these essays demonstrates how to conduct and present this process effectively.

Our winning essay from the 1st edition, "A Societal Attempt to Find Order in Murder" by Ellen Siefke, was written for her ENGL 115 course and explores questions about why crime shows are so popular. Our editorial team chose this as the winning essay because it demonstrates how a student might take an idea or question and use that as a starting point for research. Her original question ("Why are people fascinated with depictions of murder in crime shows?") might be viewed as rather abstract, but to illustrate her point, Ellen utilizes concrete examples to show her reader exactly what she means. In fact, her thesis is a series of questions, which highlights the inquiry-based approach she used in her research, and also serves to pull readers into her essay by inviting them to ask these same questions of themselves. The editorial board also appreciated how Ellen arranged and organized her argument, which incorporates many different sources along with the various primary texts she analyzed to form her argument. Within her essay, she questions important ideas that are fundamental to the way we think about morality, life, death, values, and culture, and she does so in a way that makes readers more aware of their own behavior and assumptions. Her sophisticated use of sources and critical thinking skills made this essay interesting and memorable, qualities that are very effective when crafting arguments.

Our next essay, this one from the 2nd edition of *The Write Path*, is entitled "The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate" and is written by Anjali Nelson. This research-based argument takes on a public health issue, arguing that everyone should be vaccinated against HPV before sixth grade. Anjali uses her background as a pre-med student to examine the controversies around mandatory vaccination for HPV in children from multiple perspectives and surveying a variety of sources, including medical journals, legal advocates, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many others. Her research allows Anjali to make a well-rounded argument that takes multiple sides into account while still maintaining commitment to a belief in mandated HPV vaccines for everyone. One reviewer noted that this essay has "a clear thesis; claims are supported with evidence; it's well-organized, readable on the sentence level, and it engages thoughtfully with counterarguments," all qualities important for any fully developed, effectively constructed research argument.

Alex Ackerman, our D'Artagnan Award winner for the Research-Based Argument category from the 3rd edition, selects a current public controversy for her essay, "The Confederate Flag in the Contemporary United States." Alex advocates that the Confederate flag should not fly in public spaces, but argues it would be appropriate for the flag to be flown at historical sites or museums. Alex structures her essay as a Rogerian argument, a type of argument that includes counterarguments and seeks to establish common ground between different points of view. In a Rogerian argument, a writer must be able to fairly and impartially articulate stances counter to their own. A Rogerian argument is less about trying to be right and more about creating compromise and understanding. Alex locates research from opposing points of view and explains the different sides of the controversy. She then seeks to locate a solution that will meet the concerns of multiple parties.

Josie Smith, the D'Artagnana Award winner from the 4th edition, asks important questions in this essay entitled, "Sexual Assault Prevention: Is It Enough?" In this essay, Josie explores a difficult issue that has wide-ranging effects and hits much closer to home. After establishing the scope of the problem nationally and noting that current programs do have some positive effects, Josie goes on to present research showing some of the reasons why current practices are simply not enough to combat such a ubiquitous problem. In addition to evidence about sexual assault nation-wide, Josie also connects those trends to Xavier University, showing how this is not only a problem "out there," but also one that affects immediate safety issues on campus. This attention to location, audience, and exigence makes Josie's essay relevant to her audience and shows how the arguments you research and write in your classes can have an impact on your life and community outside of the classroom.

Although you may find that your classes require you to write other types of research-based arguments or that your prompts are very different from the ones for which these essays were written, there are elements you will see in these research-based arguments that will help you with your assignments. When reading these essays, notice how the writer sets up the argument. Is it engaging to the reader? What kinds of evidence do these writers use? How are sources integrated? Think, too, about how papers begin and end. What draws a reader into a paper? How do papers conclude in a way that is memorable and effective? Each of these papers offers in-depth arguments that rely upon quite a bit of outside research and information. Notice how the arguments are arranged. What claims come first, second, and third? Is the order effective? Why might the author have chosen to set up the argument in this manner? Pay attention as well to how these writers integrate outside sources with their own ideas. Using sources well to back up one's own ideas is a complex writing process that requires much thought—and often many revisions—to implement effectively. Pay close attention to this process when you read these works since learning to do this well is an important skill to develop as a college-level writer.

In all of these cases, the student writers of these essays produced exemplary work in their first-year writing courses and learned skills for research writing and argumentation that will serve them in other classes as well. Although each discipline has its own sets of rules and expectations for writing, many of these skills—such as integrating sources, making claims, using evidence to support one’s position, etc.—will be necessary in a variety of contexts. Your first-year writing courses will help you develop these skills more fully so that you are able to utilize them effectively throughout your time at Xavier. In the following student selections, you will read reflections from these writers before reading their work. This will give you insight about the different practices that produced these pieces and offer advice from these writers that may help you in your own writing process.

At the end of each essay, you will find questions to consider about the particular piece you have just completed reading. These prompts will guide you to explore the writing and rhetorical strategies used by these student writers so that you might gain deeper understanding of what makes this work effective and you, too, could apply these skills to your writing. The editorial team hopes that you enjoy reading these essays as much as we did and that you, like the students represented here, are able to develop your writing, argument, and research skills in your first year at Xavier.

A Societal Attempt to Find Order in Murder

Ellen Siefke

First Place 2017 Winner

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

I struggled a bit in figuring out an idea for this paper; I knew that I wanted to research something different, something that did not involve politics, the environment, or any other hot-button issues. After discussion with peers, I decided to investigate a longtime curiosity of mine regarding the popularity of crime shows. To be honest, I had no idea if it even would prove a viable topic and mentioned my uncertainty to my rhetoric professor. She replied that it sounded interesting and urged me to pursue it further. With that encouragement, I took off, and the subsequent five weeks produced this essay.

The most challenging part of this assignment involved the integration of sources. I read many articles, some of them a quick read and others more than 20 pages long. It was especially difficult to determine how to incorporate the information from the longer articles into my essay, so I highlighted or underlined what I deemed the most important lines and then used those in citations. Outside of integration of quotes, another difficulty was finding the right sources. While researching, I would discover seemingly the perfect article only to learn it was exceptionally unhelpful. It is natural to want to go with the first sources you find, but I would advise students to dig a little deeper and to continue to research throughout the writing process. After drafting, for example, I determined a few holes research-wise, but with some digging, I was able to find appropriate sources for them.

In terms of the process itself, my professor proved helpful because she set deadlines for tasks like a research plan, an outline, and a draft. She also very specifically stated what was expected at each step, and these guidelines helped keep me on track. It also greatly improved the revising process, which consisted of my own revisions as well as peer editing sessions in class. Though I did not go to the Writing Center, my instructor commented on our outline and research plan. Even if a professor does not set specific deadlines for having a certain amount done, I would heavily recommend creating a plan of sorts—one that states, for example, that by this Friday, I will have completed all of my preliminary research. It really does help keep you on track and keeps the stress levels to a minimum. In addition, peer review sessions are extremely helpful because an outside source can provide valuable feedback and offer a different perspective on your topic.

A Societal Attempt to Find Order in Murder

“CSI.” “NCIS.” “Castle.” “Criminal Minds.” “Law and Order.” “American Psycho.” “Silence of the Lambs.” “Nightmare on Elm Street.” The list of crime media, from movies to TV shows to books, goes on. Normally, the various media follow a systematic formula: bad guy kills some people, the detective team comes to stop the villain, team narrowly misses him, bad guy implements a larger plot, only to be stopped in the nick of time by the good guys. Somehow, though, this formula resonates with audiences who keep tuning in for more. A curious observer of this phenomenon, however, might note that the formula does not stray from rather horrific crimes. “Criminal Minds” alone has covered ritualistic killings, savage burnings, and terrifying kidnappings, among others. Normally, people feel repulsed by this and avoid such appalling stories. So why does putting them on a screen suddenly reverse the repulsion? What makes a Jack the Ripper-esque figure sickening in real life but fascinating on TV? What makes a character like Dexter, a cop by day and full-blown serial killer by night, so appealing when any real-life persona would draw outrage?

Part of the answer lies in our very nature as human beings to classify our world in a black-and-white manner, especially when it comes to issues of morality and ethics. According to Ashley M. Donnelly’s article in *The Journal of Popular Culture*, “American popular culture typically struggles with the idea of a lack of a moral center” (17). Not having an established moral center creates chaos and confusion and leans toward relativist thinking, in which each person has his/her own set of morals without any truth in morality. The relativist viewpoint assumes a natural sense of chaos where it is impossible to clearly define any set of morals or values, the very notion with which Donnelly claims Americans struggle. Therefore, we create a sense of normalcy and label anything falling outside that sphere as “abnormal,” distinguishing instantly between those who conform to societal norms and those who stray from them (Donnelly 17). Since our minds tend toward simplistic thinking, we prefer this quick way of separating ourselves from the killers instead of having to deal with complicated issues of morality. According to a five-decade long study conducted by Daniel Kahneman, a Nobel Laureate and Princeton psychology professor, people use mental shortcuts when facing a difficult or complicated decision to avoid delving too deeply into an issue (Lehrer). Jonah Lehrer, who wrote about Kahneman’s work in *The New Yorker*, explains that “these shortcuts aren’t a faster way of doing the math; they’re a way of skipping the math altogether” (Lehrer). Though Kahneman’s study did not specifically focus on serial killer culture, his findings can easily be applied to the subject. To dive into the mind of a serial killer can prove physically and mentally exhausting and reflect poorly on us as a society, so if we can just label the murderer as “other” and let the matter rest, we will. To determine why exactly a particular person falls outside our sphere of normalcy would be far too strenuous for our tastes, so we prefer

to make a snap judgment and move on. Labeling Sandy Hook shooter Adam Lanza or Aurora movie theater shooter James Holmes as “different” rather than trying to determine why they killed so many people is much simpler and avoids the messy task of using psychology and fancy terms about the brain. This all-or-nothing concept of morality allows us to avoid the tough gray area of ethics and simply say a person is either with us or against us (Donnelly 21).

Crime media takes full advantage of this notion and structures plotlines to revolve around our need for a system of quick identification. We can readily point out the criminals and killers in a TV show because they differ from us in obvious manners—they often lack social graces, exhibit odd habits, and generally emit a creepy vibe. TV shows simplify the idea of a serial killer and boil it down to “he’s not like the rest of us” (Donnelly 18). For example, a major villain in the “Criminal Minds” series is the Reaper, who antagonizes the BAU detective team for most of the fifth season; actually named George Foyet, the Reaper is portrayed as a psychotic killing machine, showing no remorse for his actions and never hesitating to slaughter his victims. When viewers see the Reaper, with his Jason Vorhees-like hockey mask and stereotypical black villainous outfit, they can immediately identify him as one of the “bad guys” because he falls outside their perception of the normal.

Crime media also uses oversimplification in portraying villains based on common stereotypes and misconceptions, as highlighted in an FBI study stating that “much of the general public’s knowledge concerning serial murder is a product of Hollywood productions” (FBI). The stereotypes most commonly utilized in crime shows are that killers are white males, killers are dysfunctional loners, killers are geniuses, and killers want to get caught and play twisted games with the detective team chasing them. All permeate crime shows, and all contribute to a quasi-romanticized view of serial murder, a view that we as humans readily understand. The stereotypes, by definition, play perfectly into viewers’ hands because they reinforce that preferred simplistic thinking—we associate a loner with shady business, a genius with evil acts, a white male with pedophilic tendencies. Crime shows use plotlines “created to heighten the interest of audiences, rather than to accurately portray serial murder” (FBI), and screenwriters know what their audiences want. It is little surprise, then, that “NCIS” still boasts close to 20 million viewers per episode (“NCIS”), “Law and Order: SVU” has hung around since 1999 and is now in its seventeenth season (“Law and Order”), and “Bones” remains a staple on FOX (“Bones”). Through the use of clear signals and stereotypes, crime shows remain attuned to viewers’ wants and allow them to avoid thinking too much on the morbid and graphic themes played out on the screen.

Almost all crime shows, from “NCIS” to “CSI” to “Castle,” utilize similar methods. The episodes begin with the murder itself, often accompanied by ominous music: we know what lies ahead and need not think too hard on it. Typical episodes involve the respective detective teams chasing after the killer,

being foiled a few times, finally putting all of the clues together, and then triumphantly nabbing the criminal in the nick of time before some larger, more egregious plot can be carried out. Despite this relatively fixed formula, people keep coming back for more. In its peak, “CSI” boasted around 25 million viewers per season (“CSI”), which led to the creation of several spinoffs like “CSI: Miami” and “CSI: New York.” “Criminal Minds,” though never reaching the same popularity as “CSI,” continues to see around 10 million viewers per episode and has maintained its Wednesday night primetime spot (“*Criminal Minds*”). Clearly, though the episodes show little variety in their structure, they resonate with audiences. But is it enough to attribute this popularity merely to the human tendency to oversimplify? At the end of the day, crime shows are still about crime and murder, a rather taboo and grisly subject, so there must be other forces at work here.

Table 1 The chart below displays the viewership statistics for the fifteenth and final season of “CSI.” Despite being on the air for around fifteen years, the show still had close to 10 million viewers per episode (“CSI”).

| Air Date | | Episode | 18–49 Demo | % Demo Change | Viewers (Mil) | % Million Change |
|----------|------------|---------|------------|---------------|---------------|------------------|
| Sunday | 09/28/2014 | 15-01 | 1.40 | –30.00%† | 9.410 | 2.63%† |
| Sunday | 10/05/2014 | 15-02 | 1.30 | –7.14% | 8.092 | –14.01% |
| Sunday | 10/12/2014 | 15-03 | 1.36 | 4.62% | 8.771 | 8.39% |
| Sunday | 10/19/2014 | 15-04 | 1.37 | 0.74% | 8.855 | 0.96% |
| Sunday | 11/09/2014 | 15-05 | 1.24 | –9.49% | 8.669 | –2.10% |
| Sunday | 11/16/2014 | 15-06 | 1.29 | 4.03% | 8.447 | –2.56% |
| Sunday | 11/23/2014 | 15-07 | 1.28 | –0.78% | 7.877 | –6.75% |
| Sunday | 11/30/2014 | 15-08 | 1.38 | 7.81% | 8.303 | 5.41% |
| Sunday | 12/07/2014 | 15-09 | 1.24 | –10.14% | 7.887 | –5.01% |
| Sunday | 12/14/2014 | 15-10 | 1.23 | –0.81% | 7.475 | –5.22% |
| Sunday | 12/21/2014 | 15-11 | 1.29 | 4.88% | 7.340 | –1.81% |
| Sunday | 12/28/2014 | 15-12 | 1.44 | 11.63% | 7.842 | 6.84% |
| Sunday | 01/04/2015 | 15-13 | 1.27 | –11.81% | 8.617 | 9.88% |
| Sunday | 01/25/2015 | 15-14 | 1.20 | –5.51% | 8.251 | –4.25% |
| Sunday | 01/25/2015 | 15-15 | 1.28 | 6.69% | 8.297 | 0.56% |
| Tuesday | 01/27/2015 | 15-16 | 1.60 | 25.00% | 10.377 | 25.07% |
| Sunday | 02/15/2015 | 15-17 | 1.12 | –30.00% | 7.116 | –31.43% |
| Sunday | 02/15/2015 | 15-18 | 1.08 | –3.57% | 7.119 | 0.04% |

The other major reason that we indulge in crime shows is that they reinforce our own moral codes and values and confirm that they still function. Donnelly asserts that “our recognized acceptance of the Other must further perpetuate our ideologies” (23). We like to watch crime shows for their formulaic plot that always allows the good guys to win—even if we must wait the entire season, a common technique used by writers to build suspense and maintain viewership. Donnelly uses the example of anti-heroes to illustrate this point; she specifically looks to Henry from “Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer,” John McNaughton’s 1986 psychological thriller that depicts the titular character as he embarks on a cross-country killing spree, randomly slaying his victims. Donnelly claims that these types of characters, who kill seemingly for no reason, “[give] us something real to fear within our own society” (20). This fear is the fear of darkness within ourselves—in the case of Henry, there exists no apparent external cause for evil other than the menacing presence of it. The popular crime villain, however, always has a clear *modus operandi*, or method of killing, a clear motive, and a clear reason for resorting to killing, usually in the form of some childhood trauma or bizarre mental disorder. We as viewers process a simplistic reason for the actions played out on screen and are able to push that fear of evil aside. After all, those who are committing the crime are doing so because they are not like us.

The fear of evil about which Donnelly wrote does not exist without warrant; one need only look at the events that have transpired during the course of current young adults’ and teenagers’ lifetimes. Most young people can hardly remember a pre-9/11 world in which terrorist attacks were hardly on anyone’s mind. Not only did the World Trade Center attacks radically alter Americans’ sense of privacy and security, but it also, in many ways, set the tone for the years of violence that would follow. We, the upcoming generation, cannot recall any time in which America was not shipping troops off to some Middle Eastern country to fight terrorism. We have no memories of going to an airport and not being subjected to intense scrutiny, all in the name of security and protection. We have never known a world in which we did not constantly hear about the potential dangers from other countries and terrorists or witnessed such horrific attacks as the most recent slaughter in Paris.

The 9/11 attacks are unfortunately far from the only violent event that young adults have experienced. From Virginia Tech in 2007 to Sandy Hook in 2012 to Umpqua Community College in 2015, school shootings have practically become expected. We have heard about so many that they hardly faze us anymore. The recent stories centering on racial tensions, especially involving police brutality, have permeated media outlets, letting us know just how corrupt and decrepit our so-called protectors are. From Ferguson to Freddie Gray, it seems as though the battle is white cops versus black citizens. Each incident increases the tension a little more, and with movements like #BlackLivesMatter, the unrest is unlikely to cease. We are bombarded with messages and stories about how the dangers and increasing violence of contact sports like football

and how barbaric they make us seem. Numerous former professional players have sued organizations like the NFL on the grounds that though information about the dangers of concussions, among other injuries, was known, nothing was done in terms of prevention. We constantly read about the latest incidents of gang violence in impoverished inner city neighborhoods, to the point that, for a person living in the Chicagoland area, the body count remains merely a statistic. Suicide and mental illness, as well as addiction stories, permeate the news. Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Heath Ledger, Cory Monteith, and many others gone too soon spread awareness of such severe and debilitating problems and show their true, horrible effects. We are also the anti-bullying generation, practically raised on anti-bullying videos and presentations and movies, so much so that for some, the word "bullying" has ceased to have meaning. All in all, the events of our lives have left us fairly disenfranchised and skeptical regarding the supposed greatness of our country and society. We feel extremely pessimistic about society's ability to function.

Many argue that such events and the prevalence of crime shows and graphic media has left us desensitized to violence and that we no longer feel so strongly about the aforementioned incidents and themes. Surveys like that of the 2011 Red Cross study concerning the post-9/11 attitudes of youth are used to demonstrate our alleged lack of awareness of violence. That study in particular concerned the Geneva Convention, a series of treaties regarding treatment of prisoners and civilians during wartime, and found a lack of understanding surrounding the various humanitarian laws. For example, the study found that forty-eight percent of the youth had never even heard of the Geneva Conventions and otherwise discovered a significant lack of understanding about the treaties (Rose). Proponents of this argument contend that because of our constant exposure to violence, we are more violent people and thus enjoy viewing violent acts.

Another common argument is that our generation's consumption of crime media reflects our materialistic culture and that to us, crime shows represent only one aspect of the "violence of consumerism," as Loughborough University professor Brian Jarvis calls it. Jarvis' article, "Monsters Inc.: Serial Killers and Consumer Culture," claims that the "dreams of the serial killer and the serial consumer converge: reinventing the self through bodily transformation and transcendence" (334). As a generation incessantly deemed materialistic and shallow, we continually seek to fill some sort of void in our lives through spending in the same way a serial killer attempts to fill that same void through slaughter. Therefore, in a sick and twisted way, we can at least empathize with the killers portrayed in crime media, as some small part of us understands the need to feel like we belong, like we have a purpose, like we have worth. The bombardment of celebrity images brandishing perfect bodies and even more perfect style attributes to our lowered feelings of self-worth, so the commercial serial killer's capacity to go above and beyond to feel better parallels our own actions

intended for the same effect (336). Thus, while watching crime shows, we see the need to fill the void played out in such a horrific way that we can reconcile with our own need for consumption.

However, these arguments incorrectly assume that young adults want more violence and that we subject ourselves to crime shows to fulfill some hollowness. This could not be further from the truth. We are so battered from all the violence in our lives and from the constant bashing at the hands of society that we just want a break. We just want something, anything, that will tell us we are not going to become bad guys, that the values we have been taught since birth still have some meaning. We are not desensitized; we are exhausted. Crime shows allow us, even for a little while, to pretend that the world still goes round. Seeing the bad guy get caught and brought to justice time after time again reassures us that no matter what may be happening around us, someone will always be there to save the day, and that our morals and values still have meaning. Watching the detective teams nab the killers reminds us that all hope is not gone and that somehow, our perceptions of right and wrong can still work, even if only on the screen.

Ultimately, our obsession with serial killers speaks to our incessant need to have our values and order confirmed. Christina Gregoriou, an English lecturer at Leeds University, asserts that crime fiction and media “confront us with justice system inadequacies, and demonstrate how we go about understanding good and evil” (284). These shows serve as a way for us to face our own fears about good and evil; they allow us to attribute it to some external force instead of pondering the possibility of its presence within ourselves. With so many examples of evil in recent years, one could hardly blame society, especially young people, for trying to find a way to cope—our indoctrination of violence indicates that our present system of values, a system that we have relied on for as long as we can remember, may not work anymore, and we need something, anything, to assure us that we are all right. Crime fiction gives us an outlet of assurance, a sense of comfort, and a reaffirmation that we possess the proper morals and values that allow us to function as a healthy and “good” society.

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Questions to Consider

1. In her reflection, Ellen mentions that she struggled to find the right sources to answer her research questions. When you read her essay, do you find that she has effectively answered her own questions? Do you still have any questions that are left unanswered by the end? What other types of sources might she have sought to more thoroughly answer her research questions?
2. Ellen ends the first paragraph of her paper with a couple of questions, rather than a more conventional thesis. What purpose do these questions serve? Do these questions organize and focus her essay in the way that a thesis *statement* would? Why might she have made this choice and in what contexts could this be the most effective way to introduce a main idea?
3. Ellen's paper deals with many abstract concepts, such as morality, meaning, violence, and evil as represented in concrete texts, such as crime shows. How does she use transitions between paragraphs and ideas to guide the reader through these complex ideas? Does this make her argument easier for you to follow? What other strategies might she have employed to lead readers through her argument?

The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate

Anjali Nelson

First Place 2018 Winner

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

As a student on a pre-med track, I wanted the topic of my essay to relate to a controversy in health. I delved into the topic of the HPV vaccine mandates, as it is relevant in the medical world today and as I'm passionate about vaccination. This persuasive essay was a compilation of research and analysis from two previous essays I wrote on the same topic. For this reason, a good portion of my writing in this paper came from those papers. Choosing a topic that actually interested me was important for this paper and helped me avoid burnout. The more excited a student is about a topic, the better the paper will be.

While writing the paper, I did not feel confident in its organization, as the issue is broad and the essay has so many components. Also, another thing that I noticed in my rhetoric class is that I struggle with typos and grammar errors. Revising these essays several times and having different people read the essays are vital for me. For this reason, I had my professor read parts of the essay during office hours, went to the Writing Center, and asked friends to read it. I was able to spot these errors readily and felt more confident on the arrangement of my paper. Xavier is filled with great opportunities to improve your papers like the Writing Center and professors' office hours. I encourage students to take advantage of these tools at Xavier.

The Medical Practicalities of an HPV Vaccine Mandate

For many pediatricians, struggles with parents of sixth-grade girls surrounding HPV vaccine requirements are all too familiar. Many parents ponder why their young daughter needs to be vaccinated against a sexually transmitted disease and oppose any government mandates of the treatments. However, this vaccine is a medical advancement whose implementation will improve public sexual health. According to medical professionals, a mandate requiring young girls to receive the vaccine prior to entering sixth grade benefits many adolescents. In fact, some doctors argue that requiring sixth-grade boys to be vaccinated against HPV can be advantageous, as well. However, these physicians clash with value-driven parents who worry about the safety, and especially about the sexual implications, of the vaccine. Despite the concerns of parents, a mandate for both sixth-grade boys and girls in public schools should be implemented. Rather than failing to require the vaccine and solely advocating for abstinence, the government and educators should require the HPV vaccine before entering public schools. A state-wide mandate of the vaccine for both males and females before sixth grade benefits the sexual health of the public.

Human papilloma virus, or HPV, is the most common sexually transmitted infection. The most common forms of HPV are spread through intimate contact. According to the Centers for Disease Control, approximately 79 million Americans have some type of HPV. Many strains of HPV leave within two years, and the majority infected will never develop major health issues. However, certain infections can be lasting, leading to genital warts and several forms of cancer in both males and females. Due to the latent behavior of the virus, many people unknowingly spread HPV through intercourse. In some cases, a pregnant mother can spread the virus to the fetus, causing an infant born with genital warts in his or her throat (“HPV Vaccine Information For Young Women”).

The University of Queensland created the HPV vaccine, and the FDA approved the HPV vaccine in 2006. There are three forms of the vaccine: Cervarix®, Gardasil®, and Gardasil® 9.

According to the CDC, HPV vaccines have proven in clinical trials to guard against genital warts and events before cervical cancer. Reportedly, the vaccine has reduced the amount of HPV infections in adolescents by approximately 64%. The CDC has recommended the HPV vaccine for children between the ages of 11 and 12 and that it can be administered as early as the age of nine. For children under 15, two doses are recommended, while adolescents need three doses. Physicians believe that children should receive the vaccine before puberty when they might be exposed to HPV. The CDC professes that the United States currently has the most effective and safe administration of the vaccine throughout time (“Questions and Answers”).

Due to the effectiveness of the vaccine, several bills have been introduced that seek to make the HPV vaccine mandatory for public school. In Virginia, Rhode Island, and Washington D.C., there are requirements of vaccination before entering middle school. Many of these policies are aimed towards girls, since these vaccines are focused on preventing cervical cancer. Due to parental complaints, several bills in other states have not gained ground. Even in the states in which the mandate is enforced, several exemptions are allowed, based on health, religious, and philosophical reasons (“HPV Vaccination: State Legislation and Statutes”).

In this essay, I will give evidence about the effectiveness and necessity of the vaccine. I will discuss medical professionals’ opinions, discussing their reasons for the mandates. Looking at arguments from law-educated personnel, I will assert that such a mandate is legal. I will present evidence that this vaccine is also useful for young men, against the spread of the STI and in the prevention of throat cancer. Later, I will address opposition to the vaccine, by presenting studies and statistics in response. In detail, I will refute claims that the vaccine is incredibly dangerous and that uptake leads to increased sexual activity. In the conclusion of this argument, I will restate my beliefs as to why the vaccination should be mandated for both adolescent girls and boys. I will also connect this controversy to the Xavier community, which values progress in public health and the safety of the entire community.

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), the HPV vaccine successfully prevents several strains of HPV when given to children before they engage in sexual activity. This is the main reason for the seemingly early administration of the vaccine. The vast majority of children have not engaged in intercourse prior to sixth grade. It is important that these children receive protection prior to any chance of being exposed to the virus. When Gardasil and Cervarix were still being approved, trials revealed that the treatments were 100% effective in preventing the infection of the cervical region from HPV 16 and 18. In men, the vaccine successfully prevents anal cells from changing due to genital warts and HPV infection. The vaccine also effectively protects women against oropharyngeal infections. Research even found that merely receiving one dose benefitted adolescents (“Human Papillomavirus Vaccines”). The effectiveness of the vaccine is reason enough to wholeheartedly support this vaccine. These treatments are advancing public health, protecting against the most common STI in the United States. Such an effective vaccine should be mandated for adolescents, who will reap the benefits of these treatments throughout their entire life.

Schoolchildren are the real stakeholders in this debate about vaccination for HPV, and a mandate will assist them in the future when they might be exposed to HPV. The requirement of this vaccine is a social benefit. This mandate is more important than the “high school students who could be exposed to HPV by having sex with unimmunized classmates; this is about preventing cancer throughout every child’s lifetime.” It seems strange to require a medical treatment for one’s child, but this mandate is necessary because it is a public good, affecting more than just one child (McCarthy). This issue benefits all children, while many parents opposing this measure look solely at unfounded health concerns. For many in the medical community, the big picture in the controversy about vaccination involves the number of people that are immunized due to these requirements. Parents and lawmakers concerned about particular children disregard the immense benefits of this vaccine. This mandate centers on reducing the prevalence of HPV in the entire population, instead of harming children or encouraging them to engage in premature sex.

Many mandates focus on young girls receiving the vaccine, but adolescent boys should also be required to be vaccinated against HPV. On average, over 50% of men will contract HPV in their lifetime. HPV can be equally detrimental to men as to women, causing penile, anal, and throat cancer (Chen 291). In fact, oral HPV is three times more common in men than in woman (“HPV and Oropharyngeal Cancer”). There is also the added issue of the spread of HPV. The majority of HPV infections are spread by men to women or other men (Chen 291). Since men and women both suffer the consequences of such a common STI, it is logical that girls and boys receive the vaccination prior to entering the sixth grade. This extension of the mandate can also relieve a lot of parental stress over the sexual implications of the vaccine. Unfortunately, there is still a stigma surrounding women engaging in sexual activity, as society has the tendency to prize a woman’s innocence and purity. The fact that the

mandate normally targets young girls exacerbates parents' fears about the sexual activity of their daughters. If officials extend the mandate to boys, parents might grow to accept the vaccine, as it does not target their daughters specifically. Lawmakers should mandate the vaccine for both boys and girls in order to eliminate parental uneasiness about their daughters and improve the public health of all children.

In a study published in *Pediatrics*, researchers discovered specific reasons why parents refrained from vaccinating their children from HPV. NIS-Teen, from 2008 to 2010, randomly phoned parents of adolescents and asked about plans for vaccination and reasons for not vaccinating (Darden 646). The survey found that, over time, parents were more likely to vaccinate their children from HPV. In fact, the proportion of adolescents not vaccinated from HPV decreased from 83.8% in 2008 to 75.2% in 2010 (648). However, as clearly shown, the majority of parents do not intend to vaccinate their children from HPV, and the reasoning is quite consistent. Parents frequently cited "not necessary/needed" and "not sexually active" as reasons for not vaccinating against HPV (645). Many parents of young daughters might either be afraid of their daughters engaging in sex or in denial that the possibility exists. Additionally, from 2008 to 2010, there was a 4.5% increase in the number of parents crediting health concerns as main reasons for not vaccinating (649). In spite of many doctors recommending the HPV vaccine, large proportions of parents still opt to not vaccinate their children from HPV (650). Parents, who care deeply for their children, might be swayed by loud voices in the anti-vaccination and abstinence-only crowds. Even against their physicians' advice, many parents will unnecessarily worry about and vehemently oppose the vaccine mandate. Seeing these results, physicians worry about the health implications of parents opting out of vaccination.

Some proponents of alternative medicine and critics of vaccines argue that the vaccination is not as effective and can, in fact, be harmful. Joseph Mercola, an alternative healthcare provider, questions the effectiveness of the Gardasil treatments. Some proponents of alternative medicine report many deaths following the HPV vaccination and other health issues like neurodegenerative disorders and disabilities (Mercola). What's often used by voices in the anti-HPV vaccination community is anecdotal evidence. Chastity educator Shawna Sparrow wishes to "personalize those numbers" by describing the death of two young women. For example, she discusses Gabrielle Swank who became ill after her treatments and was diagnosed with inflammation of her central nervous system. After her death, her neurologist presumed that the Gardasil treatments led to these events. Additionally, Sparrow reports that a college student died three weeks after receiving the Gardasil treatments, with cause of death unknown (39). Parents, who understandably worry about the health of their children, listen to these tragic, yet isolated incidences and dismiss the HPV vaccine's benefits.

While these conditions are extremely tragic, these claims fail to acknowledge the ubiquity of the vaccine. Seventy-nine million doses of Gardasil were distributed between June 2006 and March 2016 ("Frequently Asked Questions

About HPV Vaccine Safety”). This proportion of serious, negative events linked to Gardasil is less than 0.05%. Without dismissing the experiences of affected persons, there is undeniable evidence that it is extremely unlikely that a child receiving Gardasil will suffer adverse effects. What’s equally frustrating in a medical conversation is the use of anecdotes over scientific, research-based evidence. Anecdotal evidence should not hold weight in this situation. There is no conclusive evidence that the Gardasil treatments caused these girls’ deaths. Even though Swank’s neurologist believes that the treatments are to blame, one doctor’s claim does not provide the support needed to prove the danger of the treatments. Arguments based on medical research and the opinions of several physicians and scientists are essential in the debate over the safety of the vaccine.

Some parents and religious figures believe that they have the right to make the sole medical decisions for their children. They are troubled that the government is not giving parents enough choice and time to have discussions with their daughters about the dangers of STIs like HPV. To them, the vaccination should not be mandated, because they believe that the government should not be able to make decisions when it comes to medical issues for their children (“Statement on HPV Vaccine”). Parents should make decisions about their children’s medical health. However, vaccines involve more than one’s own child. Vaccines improve the health of the entire community. This is why the federal government supports the legality of these mandates. The requirement is no different than that of the past. In 1905 the Supreme Court declared, in *Jacobsen v. Massachusetts*, that the state possesses “police powers” to monitor immunization for the public good (Cox and Stewart 318). However, many parents and religious leaders protest that the HPV vaccine should not be mandated because this disease is spread by sexual relations. In 2000, the court, citing the previous case, upheld a Hepatitis B vaccine mandate, an infection spread by sexual means, even though parents argued against it (327). Virginia and D.C. have a broad opt-out program for parents with religious and medical reasons which correlates solely to the sexual nature of the transmittance of HPV (323). Even though parents might have differences of beliefs about sexual activity, the precedence of Supreme Court decisions support these mandates, while opt-outs defend parental rights.

Abstinence proponents and religious figures argue that administration of the Gardasil vaccination to 11-year-old girls causes them to lose their innocence. Many, including Sparrow, believe that “schools are so sure that young girls are going to grow up to have sex with multiple partners that they are giving all of them a potentially lethal vaccine” (39). For example, Sparrow believes that when a young girl receives the Gardasil treatments, she expects to engage in intercourse at a young age. She believes that abstinence is the main way to prevent the spread of HPV. I agree with Sparrow that children in the sixth grade lack the maturity to engage in sex. However, there is evidence that these predictions are off-base. Reports examined the uptake of the vaccine and

sexual activity of adolescents. According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control, there was no modification of sexual behaviors after being vaccinated from HPV (Bednarczyk 801). Evidently, children do not see HPV vaccination as a justifier for early intercourse. According to research, adolescents will not engage in sexual behavior at a higher rate after vaccination. Sparrow's worries, as well as potential parental concerns, are quelled by this study.

Advocacy for abstinence is also undermined by the percentage of young people breaking their chastity vows. According to a study performed by Janet Rosenbaum, 82% of people who took a purity pledge disavowed their commitments. In fact, these people were more likely to engage in riskier sexual behavior. For example, they were 10% less likely to use a condom and 6% less likely to use contraception. The study mentioned that abstinence programs were likely to minimize the importance of condoms, vaccination from STIs, and contraception, in favor of merely promoting chastity. Abstinence education misinforms students, teaching them that contraception and these vaccinations are not at all effective, a problematic mindset for teenagers who are likely to engage in sex. These programs teach adolescents that premarital sex is shameful and leads to consequences, i.e., STIs and pregnancy. It is illogical to believe that by teaching abstinence, adolescents will not have sex before marriage. By not administering the HPV vaccine to youth and only teaching them abstinence, educators and parents jeopardize the children's futures.

Instead of allowing anti-vaccine and pro-chastity proponents to warn children about the Gardasil treatments and premarital sex and solely advocating for abstinence, the government should mandate the HPV vaccine for boys and girls. First and foremost, this vaccine does wonders in the medical world. This vaccine is important in the discussion about STIs and sex education. Scaring parents using anecdotal evidence and a small proportion of adverse effects from the vaccine is not conducive to this conversation. If society wishes that there will be improvements in sexual health, people must accept that both boys and girls will engage in sex and that vaccinations for HPV are beneficial. We must overcome the mental roadblock about girls and boys engaging in sex that scares us into making detrimental decisions for our children. To improve health and fight against ignorance, we must support comprehensive sex education programs that stress the importance of these vaccines. If a community values health and equality between the sexes, it must spread as much information as possible about the necessity of the vaccines and combat any faulty opposition.

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Questions to Consider

1. In her reflection, Anjali says that she struggled with the organization of this paper because there were so many ideas and sources to organize. If you outlined her paper, how would it look? What strategies did she use to effectively arrange the information in this paper? What reasons might she have had for choosing the organizational strategy that she did? Are there other ways that you could imagine effectively organizing this paper?
2. Anjali uses a variety of sources in her paper, drawing largely from medical resources. She notes in her paper that one of the main reasons parents resist the HPV vaccine is because of their beliefs about abstinence and that the vaccine will promote promiscuous behavior. How does Anjali address these concerns or counterarguments? Do you think that parents are included in her intended audience? Why or why not? How might her argument and/or sources change if she addressed a different audience? What is the relationship between audience, sources, and the evidence offered?
3. Anjali is a pre-med student who specifically chose this topic because of her interest in public health. How does her background influence her ethos as the writer of this essay? Even if you did not know this about Anjali, are there places in the text where her knowledge of medicine, science, and public health are apparent? Do you think that this essay would be as convincing if it had been written by someone with a different background? How might interest, previous knowledge, and a broad understanding of the issue at hand contribute to the ethos of the writer?

The Confederate Flag in the Contemporary United States

Alex Ackerman

D'Artagnan Award 2019 Winner

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

I chose this topic for my research because it was something that related to our class theme of free speech and was something about which I felt passionately. Originally, I was unsure of what approach to take in regards to the structure of my paper; talking with my professor greatly helped me decide on the Rogerian model of argumentation. The combination of discussion with my professor, peer review, and the Writing Center helped me to improve the quality of my paper and to work through the challenges that I encountered, such as the structure of the paper. Due to this project, I now have more knowledge that allows me to be able to support my opinions with research and understand the other side of the argument, even if I disagree with it.

The most important aspect of my research that I would like a reader to take away from my work is the importance of empathy and education in order to open up conversation, and I hope that readers will have a better understanding of this after reading my paper. The most challenging aspect of my research was finding articles to back up my claim that the flag is an inherently racist symbol because there was little research that directly “proved” these ideas. However, I enjoyed reading the scholarly articles and journals that I found, and I would certainly like to continue this research because it is an important part of America’s history and presents many different challenges to address. I think that it is important to consider the fact that it is difficult to admit that something to which you feel connected is inherently racist. I tried to make it so that education was the focal point of my solution rather than pointing fingers at those who feel connected to the Confederate flag because of “pride.” I genuinely enjoyed this assignment, as it pushed me out of my comfort zone to research a topic under the umbrella of free speech, and it helped me to clarify my own point of view through research.

When writing a paper, it is important to seek out one’s professor or help from the Writing Center to improve one’s essay. Furthermore, revision at multiple stages was helpful in refining my writing. The series of steps of the writing process, including an annotated bibliography, zero draft, rough draft, and final draft, were all important components that enabled me to fully develop and expand my research and argument. I often struggle with my first draft, so I had to remember that it is better to have something rather than nothing. For my zero draft, I did not pay attention to organization as much; rather, I focused on writing the important ideas that I wanted to convey. As such, revising was an important part of my writing process, and attending office hours and the Writing Center was valuable to this process. Everyone is at different levels in

their writing, so having patience with yourself is key to completing what you envision your paper to be. In addition, seeking out help, no matter how confident you are in your writing, is beneficial so that you have an outside opinion and a fresh pair of eyes to analyze your work.

The Confederate Flag in the Contemporary United States

In recent years, controversy after controversy related to the Confederate flag and its position in public spaces in the United States has shaken the country to its core, bringing to light the question of its inherent nature as a symbol. While there are a variety of differing points of view regarding the Confederate flag, individuals tend to fall into two key groups: those in favor of the flag and those who oppose the flag and what it represents. This current divide, in part influenced by events such as those in Columbia that gained national attention, has created an elevated sense of tension among a variety of groups and individuals, especially in those who encounter the Confederate flag and other Confederate imagery on a regular basis in their hometowns. Due to these heightened tensions, people have given voice to their strong beliefs by means of protests; both sides participate in these protests, which often contribute to the escalation of tensions. At the root of these tensions and protests is the question of the Confederate flag's role within the United States as a symbol and its placement in public areas; individuals interpret the significance of flying the flag publicly in a variety of ways, and this interpretation contributes to the conflict of whether or not the flag should be endorsed on a public level. Thus, the very definition of the flag and what it promotes wildly differs across a variety of individuals, making it difficult to reach a single solution and take a subsequent course of action. In order to resolve this dispute, the Confederate flag should be removed from public areas due to the fact that it stands as a racist symbol and as such poses harm to African Americans; instead, it should be preserved by means of a neutral museum that will present history as it truly happened, as doing so will benefit the country as a whole.

Those in favor of the Confederate flag take the stance that the flag is a symbol of pride and heritage rather than hate, in addition to the idea that it honors Confederate veterans. Ben Jones, chief of heritage operations for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, acknowledges the fact that the flag has been "appropriated and desecrated" by people in order to promote a racist agenda. However, he argues that just because it can be used for racist messages does not mean that the flag itself is inherently racist, a belief shared among many supporters. The commemoration of Confederate veterans is connected to the importance of heritage, given that many supporters of the Confederate flag are descendants of those veterans. Shannon Blume, an attendee of Charleston protests regarding the flag, spoke that "the South" is unfairly "bash[ed]" when the Civil War is discussed due to the fact that "slavery was country-wide;" she believed that the Confederate flag and monuments serve to "honor [Confederate] men"

(Holley and Brown). Another Charleston protestor in favor of the Confederate flag highlighted the importance of honoring Confederate veterans, saying that he was “flying [the] flag for the people who died ... for [the] flag” (Goodman). These quotes serve to exemplify the important intersection of heritage and remembrance of Confederate veterans. Numerous Southerners are emotionally invested in the legacy of the Confederacy and thus feel personal connection to the Confederate flag when it is flown in public areas.

Furthermore, those opposed to taking away the flag argue that to remove it from public space is revisionist, since that action would rid American citizens of reminders of their country’s past and the realities of the nation’s history. Belinda Kennedy, the owner of a Confederate flag store in Alabama, states that customers are purchasing the Confederate flag in larger quantities because they perceive that “they are just pushing back at people who are trying to revise [their] history” (Layne). Confederate organizations after the Civil War sought to “see that truth in history shall be taught,” highlighting the importance of the disparities in truth between Confederate and other narratives (Bailey 237). These ideas raise an important point, given that it is important for Americans to remain aware of what happened while slavery was legal so that they can learn from the past. That being said, there are better ways for American history to be memorialized that do not pose as much harm to certain individuals and are still neutral.

In order to begin dialogue regarding a solution to the issue of the Confederate flag, establishing the Confederate flag as a racist symbol will open doors to understanding so that steps toward action can be taken. What the flag stood for during the Civil War to the Confederacy exemplifies the very conflict of the Civil War. The states seceded primarily due to slavery, and this history is embedded in the flag itself (Bailey 240). Thus, Confederate narratives surrounding conversation about the flag, such as the Lost Cause, directly erase the racism connected to the flag’s history, due to the fact that Southerners “fought so that [they] could own slaves” (Bailey 240). The Lost Cause philosophy of the Confederacy shifts the conflict of the Civil War from the issue of slavery to that of states’ rights, thus adjusting the portrayal of the North and South in the war (Horton). This principle is largely historically inaccurate, and acknowledging that the Confederate flag’s origin is tied to a entity who fought to maintain slavery is the first in entering in respectful debate about the flag’s role in public spaces.

Continuing into the twentieth century, many white people used the flag against African Americans during the Civil Rights Movement and later, especially as a means of intimidation. For example, in January 1987, a group of white supremacists waved the flag in the faces of Civil Rights demonstrators while simultaneously “pelting” the protestors with “rocks and bottles” (Martinez 206). These means of intimidation clearly have racist motives meant to discriminate, and the fact that the group of white supremacists waved the Confederate flag at the protestors shows the flag’s inherent connection to racism, hence its use

by white supremacists. In addition, many modern instances involve the use of the Confederate flag, as seen in the case of Bree Newsome, a woman who scaled a flagpole outside of the South Carolina capitol in order to remove the Confederate flag (Holley and Brown). In another instance of controversy, the KKK protested the removal of a monument of Robert E. Lee in Virginia; the KKK has repeatedly made use of the Confederate flag as part of their agenda of hatred and intimidation (Forman 525). Once racist groups such as the KKK appropriate the flag for their own use, the racist ties of the symbol remain connected; just as the Confederacy desired to uphold the systems of slavery, subordinating black people, the KKK's ideology promotes this continued subordination in a post-Civil War America. By flying the Confederate flag, the KKK establishes their connection to the Confederacy and its ideals. While it can be argued that only certain people use the flag to represent racism, the inherent nature of the flag, in part due to its origin, reflects racism on its own.

While some people are "traditionalists" in that they see the flag as a reminder of the "southern inheritance of honor and chivalry," many African Americans are directly harmed by the flying of the Confederate flag in public spaces (Martinez 200). During slavery, there is no doubt that African Americans experienced immense suffering due to their position as subhuman within society. Due to this inhumane treatment, now more than ever it is important to prioritize their voices in order to avoid making the same the mistakes. While the trauma faced by slaves at the time is in the past, the trauma that African Americans face today is not. In a study conducted by the director of the Mount Sinai Traumatic Stress Studies Division, it has been discovered that trauma can be passed down from generation to generation ("Can Trauma"). While the specific study was conducted with the descendants of Holocaust survivors, there is no doubt that African Americans who were former slaves underwent serious forms of trauma, such as lynching, beatings, whippings, and rape, creating an "atmosphere of mistrust, apprehension, and violence" (Schweninger 34-35). Given that many individuals have inherited the effects of trauma from their ancestors, seeing the Confederate flag in public spaces only exacerbates these harmful effects. Seeing the Confederate flag in public areas negatively impacts the emotional health of African Americans in addition to their mental health. One African American woman who attended a protest in Charleston after Newsome removed the Confederate flag said to reporter Amy Goodman that she "know[s] not to ask for ... help" if she comes across "a yard with a Confederate flag" due to the fact that she would be putting herself in an unsafe position (Goodman). Newsome herself expressed the need to "bury hate," of which the Confederate flag is an "endorsement" (Goodman). Prioritizing the voices and values of the Confederacy shows to African Americans in the United States that their safety is not valued. This reminder is painful and very real for many African Americans every day.

However, this pain is not just mental and emotional. Threats and violence against African Americans have taken place at the hands of white supremacists, causing them direct harm. Recently, preceding the white supremacy rally in

Charlottesville, a group of white supremacists beat an unarmed black man, DeAndre Harris, in a parking garage; however, one of the attackers, a member of the hate group North Carolina League of the South, pressed charges against Harris for allegedly harming the attacker (Levenson and Watts). This example demonstrates a larger pattern of violence against African Americans, specifically by white supremacists; for example, the KKK repeatedly lynched countless numbers of black people before, during, and even after the Civil Rights Movement as a means of intimidation and as an assertion of their power (Forman 526). Given this reoccurring problem, it is important to realize the connection between white supremacy and the Confederate flag and their subsequent ties to violence against black people. The physical damage imposed upon African Americans shows that their lives are directly impacted by the ideals originally promoted by the Confederacy and taken into the hands of white supremacists.

Because of the racist nature of the Confederate flag and the inadvertent harm it poses to African Americans, it is necessary to provide a more neutral means of historical documentation that does not glorify the values of the Confederacy. Distinguishing between glorification and objective presentation of information is the first step in reaching a common ground between those of differing points of view. Museums enable education, an important aspect in understanding the past, providing a means by which people can educate themselves about the history of the United States. However, the Lost Cause narrative was in part spread through museums established by the Confederate Memorial Literary Society (CMLS), promoting the values of the Confederacy. When one compares the museums established by the CMLS to more objective museums such as the Smithsonian, one can compare the different narratives presented and how those narratives affect the viewers. For example, the white women of the CMLS established the Confederate Museum in Richmond, Virginia in order to provide a solely Confederate lens regarding the Civil War and history afterwards, primarily focusing on Confederate veterans and the battles in which they participated (Hillyer). Providing a point of view that does not glorify the Confederacy but still shows the Confederate symbols will allow for the education of Americans without upholding the ideals propagated by slavery and white supremacy. This understanding of the past will enable Americans to move forward with regards to race relations. While education and understanding the past is not the only component of moving forward, it is an important step that will create more open dialogue between people of differing points of view.

Due to the harm that the Confederate flag poses to African Americans as a racist symbol, the flag should specifically be removed from public spaces in which a variety of individuals regularly encounter it. For example, in the case of Bree Newsome, the Confederate flag flew outside of the capitol building in Columbia. In this specific case, the Confederate flag should not be flown because it was in a public space, where it caused mental, emotional, and physical harm to African Americans; Newsome, because of the harm it posed to her, took action in a way that she saw fit (Goodman). However, the removal of the

flag is not wholly unique. This debate extends beyond simply the Confederate flag, given that citizens have called for the removal of a variety of symbols tied to the Confederacy. Confederate imagery as a whole includes monuments, highways, and land markers, extending its reach into American culture through the normalization of such representation. Monuments and museums played an influential role in propagating the values of the Confederacy, as they serve to memorialize the leaders of the Confederacy and their ideals. The Daughters of the Confederacy, similarly to the CMLS, established Confederate imagery across the United States as a means to legitimize their values and create a sense of control within the country. For example, the women in the Daughters of the Confederacy placed markers honoring Jefferson Davis along the highway named for him from the east to west coast, sparking much controversy, since the Confederacy's reach did not spread to the Pacific during the Civil War (Hague and Sebesta 288). This action was intended as an assertion of Confederate ideals, which directly pose harm to African Americans. These steps in maintaining a neutral lens through which people can view the flag will help prevent historical revisionism by a variety of groups and individuals.

However, as previously mentioned, the removal of the Confederate flag and other Confederate imagery is not without controversy, as it has inspired protests from both sides. It is important to consider the fact that the removal of the Confederate flag will benefit those both in favor and against the flag and what it represents. By establishing museums that will provide a neutral lens through which to view the Confederate flag, Southern states will benefit from the revenue that the museums bring. There is no doubt that many people retain a personal connection to the flag due to their heritage and connection to veterans. Even with the removal of the flag from public spaces, those individuals will still be able to fly the flag on their own property. This removal would not affect the ability of people to raise the flag outside their homes, advocating their support for the South. Removing the flag from public spaces would be removing the nostalgic lens with which people view the flag. Placing it in a museum or other vehicle for viewing it from an accurate, historical point of view will enable people to stay aware of the past without glorifying what the Confederate flag stands for. Education about America's history is imperative, as it will lead to understanding amongst everyone that can open doors to future improvement of conditions across the country. Empathy for a variety of groups of individuals is the first step in order to resolving racial conflict and tension, and misunderstanding history and its vital role in shaping the United States will not enable this necessity. While it is impossible to truly grasp what black slaves experienced under the system of slavery, opening dialogue that will give those who are silenced a voice can create an environment that encourages informed citizenship and understanding amongst all American citizens.

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Questions to Consider

1. In her reflection, Alex explains that this is a Rogerian argument, a type of argument that focuses on establishing common ground between differing points of view, in hopes of achieving greater understanding or coming up with a fair-minded solution. What are the results of this approach to argument? How does the essay handle counterarguments? How might a Rogerian argument help an author reach a broader audience? Does the essay convey a sense of dialogue and education, as Alex hoped?
2. Alex talks about writing a “zero draft,” a sort of discovery draft where a writer just gets ideas down on paper. What is the advantage of a zero draft? What strategies are helpful to you as you write arguments? What new strategies have you learned this semester?
3. This essay places the counterarguments before Alex’s own stance. What is the impact of discussing and responding to counterarguments first? How does this structure allow Alex to address her own stance more fully? What other ways could you structure your argument?

Sexual Assault Prevention: Is it Enough?

Josie Smith

D'Artagnan Award 2020 Winner—First Place

Research-Based Argument

Reflection

Bringing awareness to sexual assault on college campuses is not only an important cause, but something that I never thought I would be truly passionate about. As much as I felt a calling to research this topic, as I am a first-year, female college student, I never understood the magnitude of sexual assault on campus. Reflecting upon the precautions my parents described to me prior to beginning my first year at Xavier and the presentation given at Manresa on the warning signs of sexual assault, helped me to narrow down my topic as my mind searched for holes and gaps in these teachings. I found that I, along with so many other researchers and students, believe that the methods designed to decrease the prevalence of sexual assault on campus are ineffective, but that there must be ways to help this cause.

Finding research on this topic was not difficult as many scholarly evaluations of programs are available, but compiling the information became my main struggle. Considering there is so much available information about sexual assault and prevention techniques, to ensure I did not crowd my paper with unnecessary facts, I took great care in choosing solely the information that most strongly supported my thesis. Throughout the revision process, I continued to add more points pertaining to the Xavier community as I felt relating issues of sexual assault to our immediate neighborhood strengthened the absorption of my message. It is easy to disregard these problems when they seem out of reach but immersing yourself in the fact that sexual assault is a relevant problem, even in our community, kick-starts the conversation about protection and prevention.

Completing this essay had an impact on me knowing that the information within it could potentially save someone from experiencing the horror of sexual assault. It instilled greater sympathy in me for victims, their families, and even women at colleges with extremely lacking preventative programs. I can honestly say that understanding the concepts presented in this essay gave me a greatly different perspective on college life and how walking back to Brockman Hall alone after a late night of studying in Alter and feeling completely safe, is a luxury not many college students have.

Sexual Assault Prevention: Is it Enough?

Sexual assault is a nationwide problem that plagues society, especially on college campuses across the United States. In a study conducted by the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network, they found that 11.2% of students experience sexual violence during their time in university, and about 8.8% of these victims are female (RAINN). While most colleges and universities provide mandatory classes warning of the dangers of sexual assault in hopes of preventing further offenses, these programs are lacking in their effectiveness. Some argue that sexual assault prevention programs on campus have lasting, positive effects on students, especially in regards to increased awareness of campus resources (Bonar 1). While these programs have strong short-term effects, the long-term effects are what need increased attention if the prevalence of sexual assault on campus is to decrease. After evaluating students on many different campuses regarding consent and sexual behavior, researchers found most students seemed almost completely oblivious to the problem and lacking in their awareness of the necessity for consent (Borges 1). Educational improvements, program edits, and studies should be conducted to identify the most effective form of combatting sexual assault on campus with the greatest long-term results. Although efforts are taken on college campuses to ensure adequate awareness and safety of students regarding sexual assault, they are lacking in their effectiveness and therefore, require improvements.

College programs to educate students on the dangers of sexual assault vary for each campus in their organization, but most narrow their focus to one common idea such as defining consent. Sexual Assault Prevention Education (SAPE) programming addresses the issues of sexual assault and is translated into any effort made by the institution to "... affect sexual assault related attitudes" (Jozkowski 1). The focus of this organization is to emphasize consent as clear communication of enthusiasm for participating in sexual acts as an apparatus for prevention, centering it on the simplest three letter word: yes. Not only is this demonstrated in the form of classes or workshops educating students on sexual assault, but even the cheesy bulletin boards designed by your residence hall director explaining the pathway to consent fall under this category of prevention education. This form of sexual assault prevention is the most widely utilized by college campuses across the United States, as it seems like a fool-proof way to constantly remind students of the dangers of sexual violence. Even on Xavier University's campus, magnets featuring a "consent flow chart" and student organized demonstrations of the concept that "if I can't say yes, then I can't say no" serve as daily reminders of the necessity to recognize true consent. While these mantras stick in students' heads like a Britney Spears song, they also raise controversy from those who argue that decreasing the severity of sexual assault and necessity for consent to a simplistic phrase is inappropriate and ineffective (Jozkowski 33).

While repetition promotes awareness of the problem, it does not always directly correlate with understanding of the concept it addresses. An evaluation of 220 undergraduates' awareness of consent and sexual assault before participating in a newly devised program showed that most students were "...unaware of these policies or what they mean for actual behavior" (Borges 1). Only after being exposed to a longer treatment group involving discussions of policies, explanations of parameters, and participation in simulations, did members show a beneficial increase in knowledge. In an experiment comparing the effect of a presentation-only program on the control group and pairing that with an activity for the experimental group, the experimental group showed a significant difference in knowledge of the basic elements of consent (Borges 85). The problem arises in the fact that most colleges do not provide such an extensive program, while some shy away from sexual assault prevention altogether. This idea of neglecting to address issues related to sex was confronted on the private, religious-based campus of Charleston Southern University. Sexual violence survivors shared their stories with over 75 students to influence awareness, and after evaluating surveys taken before and after the event, participants concluded that the program was informative and more widely accepted due to the vulnerability of the speaker (Johnson 1). The implementation of emotion into prevention proves beneficial results on student awareness in generating greater empathy for victims, but the question remains: is this enough?

Emphasizing what not to do in the spectrum of sexual assault is a focus on college campuses, but researchers raise the idea that focusing on tools for proper actions and positive living provide a clearer avenue for prevention (Borges 77). Much of the talk of sexual assault in the media and on campus is in a negative connotation, focusing on the evil actions of the perpetrator and unfortunately, sometimes criticizing the accuser for not doing certain things to help prevent an attack. While communicating the dark and evil reality of sexual assault to the student body is necessary for understanding of magnitude of the problem, tools for building healthy relationships and reducing the risk of creating unhealthy environments with significant others have greater utilization (Borges 77). Romantic relationships are often equated with consent, which blurs the lines between mistaking silence as consent and the necessity for that three-letter word. A study conducted by Swift and Ryan-Finn found that while the concept and expression of consent seems like a cookie cutter definition for all members of society, sociocultural factors affect the perception of consent, leading to greater perpetration of sexual assault (Borges 78). While consent is usually outlined in the school policies on sexual misconduct, programs should be created to elaborate on the components and dispel any confusion resulting from rape myths or other factors (Borges 78). Along with defining the parameters of true consent, providing tools to form healthy relationships is a key factor in eradicating sexual assault within relationships, which can act as a starting point for prevention on the larger scale across campus.

While programs that emphasize consent as the main learning objective, theoretically, should produce positive results, some repercussions arise from honing in on this concept. Empowering the voice and choice of women is a large change from past ideologies regarding women's sexuality, but that does not take away from the fact that refusals and affirmations of sexual endeavors are so often disrespected. Understanding the power shifts between men and women is required to realize how consent-based programs indirectly drive their focus away from empathy towards victims, while disregarding the major role played by the attacker (Jozkowski 33). If college programs shift their emphasis solely to consent, then terms such as victim-blaming and rape culture must be defined and explained to students as they are often repercussions from ignorance of a victim's voice and story after being assaulted. Some school policies reinforce those stereotypical social norms which require that "women must restrict their behavior to that narrow range deemed appropriate for 'nice girls' or bear the consequences of assault and associated blame" (Day 262). Narrowing the scope of sexual assault to a degree of personal responsibility of the victim rather than unjustifiable actions by the attacker creates even greater problems in sexual assault prevention. When sexual assault programs on college campuses promote a feeling of unimportance or inferiority in women, the campus and members cannot move forward as a community against sexual violence, rather, they drift further from achieving a solution. A study published in the *Journal of Environmental Psychology* describes how programs to educate students on sexual assault are the first step, but reducing the fear of students in and around campus is the next major step to be taken in sexual assault prevention (Day 279). Both the school and society should do their part to renovate dangerous areas, prevent student housing in neighborhoods with high crime rates, and increase patrol services throughout the campus area.

Some evaluations of sexual assault programs find that they do, in fact, provide sufficient information on sexual violence and have lasting effects on students. At one large, public university, students were submitted to a 1.5-hour program focusing on tools to build healthy relationships and teaching of prevention techniques (Bonar 93). Evaluating the changes in their knowledge before and after the program using a web-based survey proved positive results in their awareness of campus resources for sexual assault prevention and assistance to victims, as well as general knowledge about the magnitude of sexual violence (Bonar 96). While some evaluations show that campus programs do help increase knowledge of sexual assault and prevention, the way in which they evaluate is not uniform, skewing the results across the board. Taking a survey immediately after participating in a program is not an effective way to test students' knowledge of sexual assault, and even though other evaluations can be created to test the effectiveness, most universities do not take time to contemplate the results and better their programs for the future. When

program evaluations are run, often the program is improved solely for that test, but continues in the insufficient manner of teaching students even after seeing the results. Constant reinforcement of campus policies and resources creates an environment of genuine understanding that sexual assault is a problem on every college campus in the United States but is so often disregarded as a channel to prevent further assault.

Although some research programs can, theoretically, prove the effective way college sexual assault programs are run, the truth is in the fact that sexual assault is still a crippling event to victims, and plagues all college campuses across the United States. Improvements such as imputing emotional testimonies from victims, peer-lead open discussion programs, and activities to solidify information presented in the program will surely improve the awareness of sexual assault as a serious problem for college students. Not only will improving programs increase prevention of sexual assault, but addressing victims with sympathy and constant support, as well as assaulters in their post-assault period will help to eradicate much of the sexual assault crisis and help protect college students across the United States (Mahoney 35).

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Questions to Consider

1. Josie begins her essay by establishing that sexual assault on college campuses is indeed a wide spread problem, as well as how colleges are choosing to handle that reality through classes and efforts at prevention. She addresses these arguments before going on to make her claim, which is that these measures are not enough. How does this opening work to ground the rest of her argument? How else might this essay have opened? What is the rhetorical effect of establishing the scope of the problem immediately, rather than introducing this information later in the paper? How did you, as a reader, respond to this information?
2. While Josie has clearly researched sexual assault on campuses as a national problem, she also connects that to the immediate surroundings of Xavier's campus, placing these violent crimes squarely at home. As a student at Xavier, how did you react to that? What difference does this local connection make to readers as they take in this information? How does Josie's writing take audience and exigence into account? Do you think this was an effective strategy? Why or why not?
3. As you have likely heard in your first-year writing course, effective arguments often integrate a mix of pathos, ethos, and logos appeals in order to be persuasive. How does this argument use each of these appeals? What emotions do you experience as a reader? How does the writer establish her ethos in relation to her audience? How does Josie use facts, statistics, and research to back her claims? Which of these do you, personally, find the most compelling?

Category: Rhetorical Analysis

The next genre of writing we will explore is the Rhetorical Analysis, which is a type of analytic approach for interpreting texts, which focuses on rhetorical appeals that work to persuade an audience. As discussed in the “Rhetorical Terms and Appeals” section near the beginning of this book, rhetoric examines particular aspects of persuasive texts in order to understand how they work. In a rhetorical analysis, you will be asked to analyze texts—which could be magazine ads, editorials, political speeches, images, videos, newspaper articles, commercials, or a host of other types of texts—from a rhetorical perspective.

While students often have background with analysis prior to coming to college, many first-year writers report that the rhetorical analysis is a new genre for them. Because of that, examples of this type of essay may be helpful to you so that you can get an idea of what might be expected in an analysis of this sort. Although your instructor may have specific guidelines and types of assignments that are different from the examples you see here, all rhetorical analyses ask the writer to investigate a text to see how it operates rhetorically. You might consider aspects of a text such as pathos (how the text moves the emotions of the audience), ethos (the authority or character of the speaker/writer), and logos (how logically an argument is presented), as well as the timing of the text you are critiquing, the context in which it was published or distributed, the audience for which it was intended, the style or tone it takes in order to connect with the audience, etc. By engaging in rhetorical analysis, you will become more aware of the rhetorical texts around you in your everyday life and be able to discern the ways in which you are persuaded. Additionally, through this awareness, you can learn to craft more rhetorically effective texts yourself, as you will when you create various arguments as part of your classroom assignments.

In our first selection, “How Cassidy Argues Snowden’s Heroism,” Christina Peterman examines an argument in support of Edward Snowden as a hero. In her analysis, Christina notes that the author of the article makes strong appeals to both character and logic, but may overlook the power of engaging the readers’ emotions. In the second selection by Nicole Gavin, “The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in ‘Citizenship in a Republic,’” the writer focuses on how a presidential speaker reaches his audience by leveraging his ethos and deploying figurative language to effectively persuade his audience. Allyson Orth, in “A Stand on Sexual Assault,” analyzes how a poem read by pop star Halsey at the 2018 Women’s March uses strong, vivid description to move her audience to take action against violence. Finally, in the essay, “Rhetorical Analysis of ‘The Limits of ‘Believe All Women,’” Gabby Sparro analyzes the tone, logic, and credibility of the author to critique some aspects of the #MeToo movement, including how the author appeals to the rights of both men and women in the piece.

As you read these essays, pay attention to the way that each essay is organized, what appeals the writers choose to focus on, the way they create an analytic thesis statement, and how they give evidence of the rhetorical devices each text uses. Organizing a rhetorical analysis can be challenging, especially for writers who want to present a more nuanced analysis than the simple “three points” strategy outlined. While it may be easy to focus on one of the major appeals (pathos, ethos, logos), most texts are more complex than that, thus dividing up the appeals and the paper in such a way can lead to a more surface-level treatment of the text than is optimal. However you decide to organize a rhetorical analysis, crafting a thesis that outlines what you will analyze and tells the audience about the text is crucial in keeping your rhetorical analysis on track, focused, and easy to follow for your readers. As you read these essays, note the way the student authors highlight aspects of the texts they are analyzing, showing how these texts work to persuade, engage, and move a reader to hold a particular point of view or take a certain action. When you begin to analyze texts rhetorically, you will become more aware of how you are persuaded, as well as how you use rhetorical appeals in your own everyday life.

How Cassidy Argues Snowden's Heroism

Christina Peterman
2017 Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

I knew as soon as I began the writing process for this Rhetorical Analysis that I wanted to examine an article centering on the issue of Edward Snowden. The whole class was focused on issues of free speech, and of all the issues we examined throughout the semester that was the one that most fascinated me. My only hesitation going in was that I had already formed an opinion on the question of Snowden's guilt, and therefore I struggled in deciding whether I wanted to analyze an article that I agreed or disagreed with. In the end I decided on one I agreed with, and therefore chose Cassidy's article. Therefore, my biggest challenge throughout the writing process was to keep my opinion out of my writing and remain clinical and detached in my analysis.

After in-class peer review I revised a lot of my word choices and sentence structure to make my paper appear less biased. One thing I found on every assignment throughout the semester was that it was always very surprising just how many edits I was able to make on my own paper, even after reviewing it so many times. Every time I took a paper to the writing center, my professor, or to a classmate during peer-review there was always something I ended up changing. I believe it was this process and these edits that allowed the final product to be as unbiased as it was, because no matter how hard we might try on our own, writers always bring in a certain level of personal bias. Therefore, I would advise every writer—from beginners to experts, to take advantage of the review process many more times than you might believe necessary, as others are always more apt to catch things that we ourselves might not notice. I promise your paper will be better for it in the end, as I know mine was.

How Cassidy Argues Snowden's Heroism

The question of Edward Snowden's guilt is one of the most convoluted and multifaceted issues to face modern America. Although it may not seem like its ramifications could possibly be that vast or far-reaching, the implications of our decision as a society on this could affect social change throughout the decade. Most people have self-divided into two groups: either Snowden is a hero or a criminal. John Cassidy, author of *The New Yorker* article "Why Edward Snowden is a Hero," clearly falls into the first category. He wrote this article to argue not only that Snowden should not be prosecuted, but also that he should be considered a national hero. Cassidy uses ethos, logos, and a variety of stylistic devices to effectively convince the reader of Snowden's merit, but in focusing so strongly on appeals to character and logic, he overlooks the potential power of a pathos appeal.

Before any attempt can be made as to determine the way in which Cassidy argues his point, one must understand the context in which he was writing. Cassidy is an author, writer, and staff contributor to *The New Yorker*, as well as the former editor of both *The Sunday Times of London* and the *New York Post*. He elected to publish his article in *The New Yorker*, an online and in print magazine typically considered left leaning. Published on June 10, 2013, the article came out at the peak of the Snowden catastrophe. The audience he was addressing was anyone who reads *The New Yorker*, and around this time would be anyone interested in the Snowden controversy. The readership of *The New Yorker* is typically liberal minded young adults. He chooses this audience because he believes it will be the most receptive to his message and argument regarding Snowden's guilt.

Cassidy's article centers around this question of guilt; he examines whether or not Snowden's leaking of classified government documents to the people of the United States was legal under the First Amendment. There is great controversy surrounding this issue because the government considers his actions to be illegal and equivalent to espionage under the Patriot Act and Espionage Act. In fact, in June 2013 when this article was published, Edward Snowden was considered to be hiding in Hong Kong to avoid U.S. prosecution. Therefore, one of the purposes of this article was to persuade the American public that he did not deserve to be prosecuted. Cassidy spends the duration of the article arguing why Snowden's actions were justified, necessary, and even heroic.

One of the ways Cassidy makes his argument so effective is by acknowledging the opposing viewpoints on this issue. In his first paragraph, he links to the opinion of one of his colleagues, Jeffery Toobin, whom he explicitly states disagrees with him. He also quotes James Clapper, Obama's director of National Intelligence at the time as saying that Snowden did "huge grave damage to [the United States] intelligence capabilities" (Cassidy). In this way, Cassidy creates an ethos appeal to the reader: he lets the reader know that he himself understands how complex and multifaceted this issue really is, and how differing but valid opinions exist. In this way he builds credibility with the reader, who now knows that not only has Cassidy looked at the different sides of the issue, he is able to refute those sides.

Cassidy further builds his personal ethos appeal by giving examples and providing links for further research. In his opening paragraph, Cassidy references two cases he believes to be similar to Snowden's, that of Daniel Ellsberg and Mordechai Vanunu. By referencing these individuals, he sets up the fact that he has researched the issue fully, which adds to his credibility as an author. In addition, if one had come across either of these examples previously, one might be more inclined to agree with his argument about Snowden. In the article, he links to other articles about each of the listed individuals, so even if the reader had never heard of them, he or she would be able to do further research, and come to his or her own conclusions.

As Cassidy transitions from background information and other examples to his opinions on the issue, he simultaneously transitions from using ethos appeals to using logos appeals. The article is full of facts, statistics, data, and

direct quotes, which serve to back up his point. Most of the data he uses serves to bolster his point about just how far reaching the N.S.A. data collection was. He cites the fact that "In March, 2013, alone ... the N.S.A. collected ninety-seven billion pieces of information from computer networks worldwide, and three billion of those pieces came from U.S.-based networks" (Cassidy). The numbers and facts give credibility to his argument by illustrating that the points on which he bases his argument are not simply speculation, but rather proven fact. Because the middle section of his article is so full of facts and numbers, one could argue that he overuses logos, but he does balance his statistical approach with a more familiar tone.

One of the ways in which Cassidy creates this familiar tone is through the stylistic device of hypophora, which is asking questions and then immediately answering them. In one example, he asks the reader "So, what did the leaks tell us?" and proceeds to answer the question, "First, they confirmed that the U.S. government, without obtaining any court warrants, routinely collects the phone logs of ... Americans" (Cassidy). This strategy creates the sense that he is having a dialogue with the reader and also serves to impart an engaging and conversational tone. Another important thing to note is that when he has a long winded answer to one of his questions, as he does in the example above, Cassidy orders the parts of his response numerically to give the reader clarity and allow him or her to follow along more closely with the argument. This appeals to logos as it ensures that clear and logical claims are made which are easy for the reader to comprehend. Both of these strategies allow the reader to engage more fully in the article and therefore make them more likely to agree with Cassidy's final conclusions.

One of the ways in which Cassidy sustains this engagement towards the end of the article is by including rhetorical questions and providing possible answers, unlike the more concrete question and answer pairs he gave towards the beginning. This signifies a shift in the article; while in the beginning he was providing background about the issue and could definitively answer questions, towards the end he moves on to the argument part of the article. For example, he asks questions such as "Were Clapper and Alexander deliberately lying?" and "So what is Snowden's real crime?" which have no definitive answer, but serve to engage the reader's mind (Cassidy). Cassidy acknowledges through this strategy that some of these questions have no one correct and/or discernable answer, which enables the reader to give more credit to his argument and perhaps even think more deeply about it themselves.

Cassidy does not just establish a familiar tone with fancy rhetorical devices, he also uses more simple and understated techniques. One example of this is his continued use of the first person plural throughout the article, such as when he says "Let's remind ourselves," "we now have to doubt," and "world in which we live" (Cassidy). This continued usage allows the reader to feel as though they are discovering and arguing alongside Cassidy and that his opinions are truly theirs. Cassidy also uses varied sentence structure, stacks short and long sentences, and short paragraphs to give a less academic and more journalistic feel

to his writing. This allows him to capture and sustain the attention of the reader, and is a very effective technique in terms of making a convincing argument.

As opposed to Cassidy's strong use of ethos and logos, one of the weaker aspects of the article is the lack of pathos, or emotional appeal. Granted, Cassidy did reference common social media sites, phone companies, etc. to enable the average person to relate to the hacks and to feel how they personally were affected, but overall the article lacked pathos connections. The article could have been made much stronger with some sort of emotional connection to the reader that engaged their attention. For example, providing personal detail on Snowden could have allowed the reader to empathize with him and therefore be more likely to agree with Cassidy that Snowden does not deserve to be incarcerated for his actions.

Cassidy might have lacked a large presence of pathos, but overall his argumentation and rhetorical style were extremely effective. He incorporated ethos and logos while balancing out the article with a variety of rhetorical devices meant to convey a familiar and engaging tone. All of these devices and techniques served to underscore the importance of his argument and allowed the reader to follow along and maintain interest in the subject matter. Cassidy not only left the reader with a good sense of the complex nature of Snowden's guilt, but he also made a valid and convincing argument that Snowden indeed should be considered a hero.

Work Cited

Cassidy, John. "Why Edward Snowden Is a Hero." *The New Yorker*. The New Yorker, 10 June 2013. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.

Questions to Consider

1. In many texts that create an argument, there are often more rhetorical appeals to analyze than could possibly be covered in a paper of this length. How do you think Christina decided upon which appeals to cover in her paper? When you do a rhetorical analysis, what aspects of a text do you think are most important to highlight for readers?
2. As mentioned in the introduction to the Rhetorical Analysis section of this book, Christina did not organize her paper in a way that focused on one appeal at a time, or a "one appeal per paragraph" strategy. How did she choose to organize her paper? Was this a logical progression that you found easy to follow? What other strategies might she have chosen to present her analysis?
3. In her reflection, Christina mentioned that she made revisions to try to make her analysis sound less biased. Do you think she was successful in making this an impartial analysis of the article? Is it possible to present a paper without any bias at all? In what situations might it be most appropriate to remain as unbiased as possible, and when it is alright to offer your opinion?

The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in “Citizenship in a Republic”

Nicole Gavin

2018 Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

This essay began as most essays do within the context of academic writing: with an evaluation of the rubric and the professor’s expectations. The assignment was “to analyze the rhetorical techniques used in a famous speech of your choosing.” The hardest part for me was making a decision regarding which speech to use. I wanted to choose a work that was not so popular that it had already been analyzed to death by linguists much more experienced and insightful than a college freshman, but I also wanted a speech that had a plethora of rhetorical devices to choose from, allowing me to play to my strengths. All of the history teachers at my high school had an outward, unapologetic affection for Theodore Roosevelt—a well-known historical figure, but not MLK or Hitler—so I researched his memorable speeches. Any of Theodore Roosevelt’s speeches would have been good picks, but “The Man in the Arena” was a speech that was motivating to me personally, and not so nuanced as to make it too difficult to analyze.

In writing the essay, I first annotated the speech with highlighter and pen, then wrote down all of the relevant literary devices and themes I found with their respective reference quotes. After I had all the ideas down, I chose the strongest arguments and used their main points to develop a thesis statement. Once the thesis statement was in place, it was simply a matter of writing out the ideas and explanations in full sentences, using MLA format. When it got to the point where I didn’t see any more glaring errors, I brought it to in-class peer editing, then the Writing Center, and others recognized and helped me fix the flaws I didn’t see before. Lastly, I read the essay in its entirety one more time, and turned it in.

The advice I would give to first year writers is to trust your training. You have been trained both in this ENGL 101 or 115 class, and in high school, to express your thoughts through words in essay format. These assignments are opportunities for you to demonstrate to your professor that you have learned something, and can use that knowledge to construct new thoughts and interpretations.

The Rhetorical Powerhouse: Theodore Roosevelt in "Citizenship in a Republic"

Theodore Roosevelt is known for his powerful effect on America; he presented robust ideas and opinions accompanied with an initiative and perseverance to catapult those opinions and ideas into action. As president, Roosevelt pushed an incredible amount of legislation through Congress, as well as made notable progress in America's relationships abroad. He was very persuasive to fellow legislators and common folk alike, and photographs confirm that it cannot be attributed to his good looks, but instead to his masterful use of rhetoric. Shortly after his presidency, Roosevelt stopped in Paris on April 23, 1910, during a tour of North Africa and Europe to deliver what would become one of his most iconic speeches. In his speech, "Citizenship in a Republic," President Theodore Roosevelt presents a compelling call to action of the individual citizen through his tactful manipulation of the audience, his use of figurative language, and his trustworthy and reliable ethos.

Roosevelt's goal in presenting this speech is to motivate the average American to engage fully in their identity as a citizen, thus making the country as a whole more engaged. Roosevelt himself says, "In the long run, success or failure will be conditioned upon the way in which the average man, the average woman, does his or her duty." He states that individual citizenship is the determining factor for success in a democratic republic, and thus individual citizenship at a higher level makes America a more powerful and united country. This stated goal is merely a logical syllogism: in a democratic republic, each individual citizen is taken into account. The collective of all individual citizens makes up the whole of the country. Therefore, if the standard of individual citizens is higher, America will be at a higher standard as a country. The goal itself is based in logos, which encourages the reader to listen and consider the point Roosevelt brings up afterward. Including logos leaves the audience with a sense of comfort—the ideas make logical sense, and the notion that it would be foolish of them not to follow the idea.

Roosevelt is completely aware of the audience he is speaking to and the points he must address in order to make a notable impact on them. He speaks to them directly saying, "You and those like you have received special advantages; [you have] had the opportunity for mental training; many of you have had leisure ..." He recognizes that his audience is within the upper class, and thus uses rhetorical techniques to influence them. He knows most of them are educated, therefore he chooses to use elevated language to appear on their level or above. Speaking in such a tone would intimidate the members of the lower class, but Roosevelt is aware that in this situation, his use of vocabulary will illicit feelings of respect, not intimidation. Noting that he is speaking to individuals of the upper class, Roosevelt speaks frankly in regard to democratic republics, America's position on the world stage, and structures of government with the knowledge that these more complex ideas will have meaning to the members of the audience. Respect from the audience and the audience's decision to deem the speaker intelligent contribute to Roosevelt's phronesis, depicting him as a credible source.

Roosevelt also manipulates this upper class audience by pointing out their specific tendency to become the kind of citizens who will not help the country make progress, then pointing them in the right direction, through the use of strong figurative language. Roosevelt warns, "Let the man of learning, the man of lettered leisure, beware of that queer and cheap temptation to pose to himself and to others as a cynic." Through the use of imagery and colorful language, Roosevelt clearly illustrates a character that he sees as a threat to his cause, and thus portrays the character in the villain role. He identifies that people of a higher class often have the tendency to fall into the role of the "cynical critic": timid, intellectually aloof, and cynical, yet eagerly awaiting the opportunity to critique others. His use of pathos in describing this kind of person gives the character a negative connotation, therefore eliciting feelings of shame or an urge to dissociate from this type of person. Dissuading people from acting or feeling a certain way is giving them a ticket to the metaphorical "reverse bandwagon." Roosevelt's "critic" imagery is so powerful that members of the audience feel the need to remove themselves from the critic category. His use of pathos is incredibly effective, as now the audience feels lost, looking for some guidance, open to new information, and possibly ready for a shift in lifestyle choices. Now that Roosevelt has them in a vulnerable position, he strategically includes similarly strong imagery in regards to the hero or "man in the arena" character. He describes in painful detail the prominent features of the "arena" character, equating him as the ideal individual citizen. Powerful phrases like "strives valiantly," "great enthusiasms," and "daring greatly" illicit the opposite emotions from the audience, encouraging them to hop on this bandwagon. In presenting these two opposing characters, Roosevelt polarizes the audience, not-so-gently shoving them to the "man in the arena" and insisting that there are only two choices in the matter: cynical critic or "man in the arena." Presenting this either/or fallacy almost forces the audience to get behind his depiction of the ideal individual citizen, and strive to resemble the "man in the arena" character. Roosevelt recognizes his audience and uses the particular weaknesses of that demographic to influence them to become more like his idea of the perfect individual citizen.

Roosevelt's most famous portion of this speech is the depiction of the man in the arena because he uses rhetorical devices and figurative language that evoke a call to action from the audience. Roosevelt preaches:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

A notable aspect of this paragraph is the fact that the bulk of it is just one long sentence. This speech was spoken, but in transcribing the words, there is a distinct use of semicolons to indicate the pace at which the words were spoken. Roosevelt uses many phrases of description, said in quick succession with the momentum of the speech escalating as each phrase emphasizes a new picture of this "man in the arena." The phrases between the semicolons are in a parallel structure, starting with "who ..." then a dynamic description. Using repetition and parallel structure establishes a cadence to the speech that is an effective tool in obtaining and keeping the attention of the audience. The repetition was also effective in emphasizing the point Roosevelt was trying to make, reinforcing the idea that the ideal citizen is one who experiences life, with its successes and failures.

The audience is so effectively manipulated by Theodore Roosevelt because he has constructed such a full-bodied ethos for himself, using the Populist Approach and humility. As a former President of the United States, Roosevelt knows he yields a certain power, yet he uses the Populist Approach and levels with the audience by using statements such as "yours and ours" and "you and we" to include himself in the group he is speaking to. His use of "we" instead of "I" or "me" is Roosevelt erasing his power to project his goodwill toward the reader. The order of these statements is also a subtle show of humility, as he says "yours" before the collective "ours" showing that he puts others before himself. Roosevelt's use of *eunoia* is aimed at making the listener feel as though Roosevelt is in the same situation as them and everyone is working toward the same goal.

The former president's *arête* and show of personal responsibility present another level of ethos in "Citizenship in a Republic." He plainly takes responsibility as both an individual citizen and as one of the republic's leaders saying, "It behooves us to do our best to see that the standard of the average citizen be kept high, and the average cannot be kept high unless the standard of the leaders is kept higher." He recognizes the importance of leaders being role models that individual citizens can look up to and aspire to be. He includes himself in that statement and claims responsibility, as he is the leader of all of the leaders. His accountability in this case increases the audience's awareness of his virtue and sense of personal responsibility. When the audience feels the speaker is virtuous and accountable, they are more likely to listen and act upon the speaker's thoughts and ideas.

Overall, Roosevelt is successful in getting his point across in this speech; he describes exactly what he desires from the individual citizen, demanding the standard be kept high, while taking responsibility for his own standard and the standard of those he is responsible for. Roosevelt portrays himself as an intelligible, humble, and responsible leader, grooming his audience to trust him. He uses the audience's logical reasoning and emotions to direct them to his main points and to justify his requests. Both the rhetoric and the content of the speech itself is still relevant today, as it is important to be reminded of the power that lies within the individual citizen.

Work Cited

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Questions to Consider

1. In this rhetorical analysis, Nicole breaks down the idea of ethos into sub-categories of phronesis, arête, and eunoia, rather than simply analyzing "ethos" as a category. What are the effects of this strategy in Nicole's paper? As a reader, were you able to glean a more nuanced understanding of how ethos operates? Or were you unsure about the terminology? How does this view of how ethos works in Roosevelt's speech help the reader of this analysis understand its rhetorical effects in this text? Would it have been more or less effective if Nicole had only discussed ethos as a whole? Why?
2. Students often struggle to create an effective thesis statement for a rhetorical analysis paper. Do you think that Nicole's thesis is a clear, focused, statement about the upcoming analysis? How does this thesis work to help organize the rest of her paper? Are there other ways she might have phrased this thesis? Could it be even more focused, descriptive, or nuanced? How would revising the thesis have potentially affected the structure of the paper?
3. In any text that one wishes to analyze rhetorically, choices have to be made about which parts to focus on and how to narrow down the analysis. Nicole mentions that she began by annotating the speech and then finding the strongest arguments, after which she developed a thesis around the main points she wanted to make. Do you think that this is an effective strategy for developing a rhetorical analysis? How would this change if the text under analysis was a visual ad? Or a video clip? What other strategies can you imagine for "collecting data" about a text to rhetorically analyze?

A Stand on Sexual Assault

Allyson Orth

D'Artagnan Award 2019 Winner

Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

The inspiration for this essay came after I listened to famous artist, Halsey, recite a poem about sexual assault at a women's march. Subsequent to hearing the poem, I found myself listening to it repeatedly and even inviting friends to listen because of its relevancy and ability to empower. Due to the profound effect the poem had on me, I was inspired to rhetorically analyze it and identify how and why the poem resonated so well with not only me, but also the people all over the world who also heard the poem.

The most challenging portion of this essay was organizing my thoughts and then formulating a clear structure for the essay. When a student is passionate about their subject matter, thoughts come easily. However, some ideas can become superfluous and distracting. While revising my work, I had to remove portions of it in order to maintain a clear and concise essay. Fortunately, my peers and professor were able to aide me throughout the revision process, which was a tremendous help. With that being said, the biggest piece of advice I could lend to first year writers is to never be afraid to have someone else read over your work and give you constructive criticism. Peer editing is vital because it allows a fresh set of eyes to look over what you have written and find ways to improve it. By gaining multiple perspectives on an essay, you're able to ensure your work is not only free of error, but the best that it can possibly be.

A Stand on Sexual Assault

I am listening to the words pour out of my friend's mouth as she discusses every unwanted and lascivious act that man did to her. The tears are rolling down her neck, the same neck he left purple bruises on. In a few days, her bruised skin will fade away but the images of what occurred that night as she begged him to stop will eternally reside in her memory. This is not an isolated account. One out of four women will experience sexual abuse while in college. Sexual abuse is a tragedy too many young women have to suffer through in silence. On January 21, singer Ashley Frangipane, better known as Halsey, shares her poem addressing sexual assault at a Women's March in New York. While Halsey's use of strong language and vivid rape accounts intimidated some, they simultaneously and effectively empowered and educated the thousands of people listening on the sickening topic of sexual assault.

Halsey promptly captivates the crowd with a detailed description of her experience in the waiting room of a Planned Parenthood with her best friend who fell victim to rape in 2009. She continues, revealing her various accounts

of sexual abuse throughout the years leading all the way up to 2018. These accounts resonate with her audience of young women who have been exposed to sexual abuse or are passionate about advocating for the topic, making her bridge effective. The underlying purpose of the speech was not to persuade but rather to specifically raise awareness and empower women to stand together to end sexual abuse.

One of Halsey's most powerful aspects of the speech includes her appeal to the audience's emotions. Halsey includes several personal accounts of the various times she experienced sexual assault growing up. She shares her earliest recollection of assault in the speech stating, "It's 2002 and my family just moved and the only people I know are my mom's friends, too, and her son/He's got a case of Matchbox cars and he says that he'll teach me to play the guitar if I just keep quiet/And the stairwell beside apartment 1245 will haunt me in my sleep for as long as I am alive." Including this experience in the poem evokes emotion from the audience, helping strengthen her claim and also connect with her audience. The quote exemplifies that her first experience with sexual assault occurred at a time when she was young enough to still be intrigued by playing with toy cars. This puts an image in the audience's head of how young and vulnerable she was, evoking feelings of pity that a helpless child was sexually taken advantage of. Halsey continues to appeal to the emotions of her audience by progressing onto a later stage in her life when she once again experience assault: "It's 2012 and I'm dating a guy and I sleep in his bed and I just learned how to drive/and he wants to have sex, and I just want to sleep He says I can't say no to him This much I owe to him He buys my dinner, so I have to blow him." This time the personal anecdote she uses elicits feelings of anger and disgust because now even after she is cognizant of the sexual abuse that is happening, she still is powerless. Halsey includes this account to trigger strong emotional reactions that will hopefully encourage and empower her audience to stand up against sexual assault.

While Halsey's appeal to emotions is effective, it is also aided by the fact that she had credibility coming into the speech. Halsey is a famous pop singer with a large fan base and a voice of influence among young woman all over the world. Having a celebrity deliver a speech intrigues the audience and gives more value to what is said, making the audience more willing to agree. This type of credibility is situational because it was a predetermined authority she had due to her profession and fame. Many young girls look up to Halsey and will be inspired to take a stand and advocate for the termination of sexual assault after hearing a role model talk about it. Not only did Halsey possess credibility derived from her own character, but also from the cause itself. Halsey proves true to be qualified to speak on the topic of sexual abuse after she shares her various narrations of sexual abuse. The audience is now more likely to agree with and also act on her claim after knowing that Halsey has too herself been abused just like many of the other women listening have.

Collectively Halsey's use of emotional appeals and her character contribute to her artistic *logos* used throughout the speech. Halsey uses constructed arguments that appeal to common sense rather than statistical or factual evidence to

fit the style of her poetic speech. Halsey uses constructed arguments to illustrate her disbelief that even celebrities experience sexual assault. Halsey formulates, "I believe I'm protected 'cause I live on a screen/Nobody would dare act that way around me/I've earned my protection, eternally clean." Here she uses an enthymeme to prove the point that since she worked hard to earn her fame in theory she should be immune from sexual assault. However, it is clearly false for she knows that no matter what a person's social class or status, no one is protected from becoming a victim of assault. The addition of this enthymeme connects with her audience and reminds them that sexual assault can affect anyone; therefore, everyone should take a stand against it. Halsey continues with this idea and includes current rape allegations of celebrities to exemplify the issue of sexual assault by adding, "But then heroes like Ashley and Simone and Gabby, McKayla and Gaga, Rosario, Aly/Remind me this is the beginning, it is not the finale." By using current events that are commonly known by the audience she is able to bolster her claim that sexual assault is prevalent in many people's life and also invigorate her audience to speak out against sexual assault just as many of the celebrities she named have recently done.

Despite her effective elements of rhetoric, critics may disfavor the use of foul language such as f-bombs and sexual references. In one line Halsey exclaims, "And I've followed damn near every one of my dreams I'm invincible and I'm so fucking naïve," which may not have resonated well with all listeners. Other lines gave such vivid details making listeners uncomfortable including when Halsey said, "You see, my best friend Sam was raped by a man/that we knew 'cause he worked in the after-school program/And he held her down with her textbook beside her/And he covered her mouth and he came inside her." While some listeners may not have enjoyed the foul language and descriptive imagery used, it was essential in conveying her point and accurately portraying the harsh reality of sexual assault. By making the audience uncomfortable, Halsey is able to aide her audience in empathizing with what sexual assault victims go through. Her speech was in no way mundane or censored, but neither is fighting the war on sexual assault, which is exactly why Halsey's malediction and inclusion of copious graphic personal accounts were effective.

In essence, Halsey's rhetorical strategies worked together to deliver a powerful and effective speech. Her goal was to inspire her audience to take a disheartening topic like sexual assault and use it to unite and rally against it. She closes off her speech saying, "For the people who had to grow up way too young/There is work to be done/There are songs to be sung/Lord knows there's a war to be won." This quote essentially outlines the underlying message of her speech that women need to come together and speak out against sexual assault in order to make a difference by leaving the audience empowered.

Work Cited

@halsey. "here is my entire 'A Story Like Mine' poem from today's #WomensMarch2018 in NYC tw: rape/assault. Thank you." 20 Jan. 2018, 12:08 p.m., [Twitter.com/halsey/status/954807991785611264](https://twitter.com/halsey/status/954807991785611264).

Questions to Consider

1. Ally chooses to organize her analysis according to the structure of the poem. She moves through the piece chronologically, analyzing a different section as she goes. However, she is able to focus on a different rhetorical device for each section. What are the benefits and challenges of organizing an analysis according to the order of the text? What would be the benefit of organizing an essay topically, by rhetorical device? What's the best way to organize your analysis?
2. The author of the poem Ally analyzes is Halsey, a famous pop singer. Ally focuses on Halsey's situational ethos—the familiarity and credibility she brings as a public figure. What are the ways an author can develop their ethos, both situational (the experience and knowledge an author brings with them) and invented (the image or persona an author deliberately crafts throughout a piece)? What other strategies can an author use to cultivate credibility, public figure or not?
3. Near the end of her analysis, Ally concedes that some of Halsey's tactics might be off-putting to some people. How does it impact her analysis to acknowledge that not all audiences will be persuaded by this piece? How is Ally able to refute this possible objection to the poem? How does this counterargument work to bolster Ally's analysis?

Rhetorical Analysis of "The Limits of 'Believe All Women'"

Gabby Sparro

D'Artagnan Award 2020 Honorable Mention

Rhetorical Analysis

Reflection

As a young woman in 2018, the #MeToo movement has always fascinated me. I am ecstatic that we are moving towards a day where no woman has to live in a constant state of fear over being sexually harassed. I am also someone who is very honest. I have always found it distasteful when a woman, for any reason, lied about being assaulted or raped. I know women who have experienced sexual assault; they are deeply affected by these types of people.

Researching this article made me relieved because I am not alone in my distaste of those who lie or exaggerate their experiences around this very sensitive subject. I hope people will learn from those people's mistakes and find other means in order to sustain and grow the movement.

"You know this article is very complicated, right?" Those were the words my father declared over the phone when I sent him the article I had chosen for this assignment. I sucked in my breath, wondering if I could actually complete this assignment and get a high grade. I slowly began writing the outline, which was the hardest part for me due to the fact I dislike writing outlines. Once I got the feedback from my professor, I began to write out my rough draft. Once that was completed, I sent my paper to my three editors. My first editor was Grammarly, an application you can download for your computer that checks grammar and spelling; it caught the little mistakes that I didn't even notice. My second editor was the Writing Help Center, who helped me come up with better versions of my final two paragraphs. My third and final editor was my partner for the peer review. Having multiple people read over my essay helped me get a clear direction for the focus of my submission as a final draft.

Rhetorical Analysis of "The Limits of 'Believe All Women'"

The #MeToo Movement will go down in history as a fantastic civil resistance movement along with women's suffrage and Gandhi's Satyagraha; however, the issues raised by #MeToo are very complex and prompt many questions. Just like civil resistance movements before it, ideas and ideologies have come about in hopes of solving the problem completely. One of these ideologies is "Believe All Women." Journalist Bari Weiss fears this particular belief could do much more harm than good. Through utilizing personal language, a plethora of examples, and capitalizing on her identity, Weiss successfully makes an argument that goes against the grain of society.

Weiss' language in this piece is very complex; she both uses personal language and advocates for men. She uses many I's as if she's speaking directly to the reader, making you feel as if you're having a conversation with her. It makes talking about such a controversial topic less intimidating. She later compares the belief to a savage call: "The huntresses' war cry—'believe all women'—has felt like a bracing corrective to a historic injustice" (Weiss). She calls this attack against all men a hunt. She compares it to something primitive to affirm that this line of thinking is for the uneducated and reckless. She wants us to realize that there are good men out there, along with bad women.

Throughout the entire article, Weiss displays logos by using examples to show the consequences of people following through with just believing women. She first says, "But the Duke lacrosse moment, the Rolling Stone moment, will come" (Weiss). She only briefly mentions these cases because they've been talked about more than enough—they are not the issue on the table. The issue is that there are women who make false accusations and that not all women are truthful. The next example she uses is "*The Washington Post* reported that a woman named Jaime Phillips approached the paper with a story about Roy Moore. She claimed that in 1992, when she was 15, he impregnated her and then he drove her to Mississippi to have an abortion. Not a lick of her story is true" (Weiss). The woman, feeling no remorse for her actions, claimed she was attempting to expose the "bias" in *The Washington Post* (Weiss). Roy Moore is already under investigation for sexual assault, and a stunt like this only hurts his victims. False accusations in general cause us to go backwards and doubt all victims. Weiss later talks about how Melanie Morgan accused Al Franken of stalking her. Many people such as Breitbart, Laura Ingraham, and Rush Limbaugh jumped on her story and magnified it. It was later revealed that he only called her three times (Weiss). It's ineffective to say exaggerations only benefit the accused because that's a well-known fact. Weiss goes into more detail about the people who believed Morgan to show that they are the ones at fault. These people only believed her because she was a woman, which is a realization that makes the audience angry. It makes them want to change this kind of thinking.

Weiss exemplifies ethos in this article mostly because she herself is a female advocating for men's rights during the #MeToo movement. This alone contrasts the criticism the article has gotten. Weiss' criticism of these women isn't to say all women are liars; rather, she is trying to keep women human. She claims that this movement is making women the "Truth personified" (Weiss). It is ironic because these women are trying to fight against men who objectify women for their own pleasure. Her straight-to-the-fact writing can make some people uncomfortable, but it is necessary. Like the #MeToo movement, Weiss is not trying to sugarcoat anything she is saying so that people will listen. The article is complicated but in a good way.

Ultimately, Weiss uses each device to convince her readers that we shouldn't just believe women because they are women. She even ends her article with a compromise: "Trust but verify" (Weiss). Already, changes on how we address sexual assault have been appearing at college campuses, places of work, and social gatherings. Weiss is creating the line, so we can have a better future.

Work Cited

Weiss, Bari. "The Limits of 'Believe All Women.'" *The New York Times*. 28 November, 2017. 08 September, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/opinion/metoo-sexual-harassment-believe-women.html>.

Questions to Consider

1. One area of rhetorical analysis essays that students often struggle with is in crafting a thesis statement that gives an overview of the upcoming analysis in a focused and specific way. However, it is possible to create thesis statements that make an "analytic argument" about the piece under consideration. After reading through Gabby's paper, how else might you craft a thesis statement that provides specific details about this analysis? What information does Gabby cover in her essay? How could that be incorporated into a focused thesis statement?
2. One area that Gabby analyzes is the "personal language" contained in the original article. How does the way a writer addresses the audience change the audience's response? What might be the point of using "I" in an article a lot, versus taking a more objective third-person perspective? How do you respond to various ways of addressing the reader in the persuasive arguments you read?
3. In this article, Gabby notes that part of the ethos of the writer comes from her being a woman and writing about this topic. How much does positionality affect the credibility of a writer? Are you more likely to be persuaded by certain writers rather than others? How can you know if a writer has "inside knowledge" of an issue? When you write, how do you establish your ethos with readers?

Category: Narrative

You may be assigned a narrative in your ENGL 101 or 115 courses, though it may be called by different names. Some genres that incorporate this form of writing include personal narratives, narrative arguments, and ethnographies. In all cases, a narrative will tell a story and typically ask you to write in first person, addressing your audience as “I.” Unlike more formal academic writing, narratives use vivid description and words that evoke emotion in readers, painting a picture of a situation or feeling so that your readers have the sense of “being there” when you tell your story.

Narratives can serve a variety of purposes in ENGL 101 and 115, and assignments involving narrative may vary greatly from class to class. Personal narratives may require you to tell a story of some aspect of your life, placing yourself with a certain cultural context, or ask you to examine an important event in your life that has shaped who you are today. An ethnography, which is typically an examination of a people and their culture, may be written about yourself as a type of narrative. In this case, an assignment might ask you to take a step back from your everyday assumptions and question your own cultural practices, applying an analytic lens to your own life the way an anthropologist would examine a less familiar society. A narrative argument uses story to make an argument where the narrative serves as a representative anecdote to illustrate a larger issue. While each of these types of assignments serves a different purpose, in all cases you may use story, description, dialog, and a first-person perspective in your writing.

In the first essay, Katie Kennedy illustrates an important event in her life through a personal narrative entitled “Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Doesn’t Work Hard.” The editorial team noted Katie’s adept use of dialog to illustrate to readers the words and intentions of Coach Marcy, an influential person in Katie’s life. In addition to the colorful description of the grueling but rewarding softball practices she endured, Katie also skillfully connected these past experiences to the present, showing how the advice of her former coach sticks with her even today. This narrative is a solid example of how to write an engaging story that holds the attention of readers, while also offering a “pay off” of advice at the end that readers can apply to their own lives.

In her narrative argument, “Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University,” Isabel DeMarco begins with her own experiences at Xavier by reflecting on incidents of racism on campus in the fall of 2016. Through this reflection, Isabel argues that it is the duty of a university to provide moral education that focuses on equality and upholding conduct that is in alignment with those values. Using research to back up her claims, Isabel argues that college is a time when students are in transition and are learning about life beyond their home communities. Because of this, college students have the ability to be positively influenced by their educational experiences; thus, universities have a duty to address morals and values, as well as disciplinary knowledge.

Category: Narrative

The next offering in the narrative category describes one student's experience with the effects of addiction. In "Drug Toxicity: Second-Hand Effects on an Addict's Sister," we learn how addiction affects family members—more specifically a sibling. (Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, the student author asked to remain anonymous.) In the essay, she focuses on a specific day: the day her family joins her brother at a rehab center for a family therapy session. While the essay focuses on this one day and the revelations the session holds, the writer also includes flashbacks and details from prior events, some years earlier. Framing the essay around one day allows the author to focus on the build-up and eventual release of emotions, while the flashbacks give us necessary context for her reactions.

In the final essay in the narrative category, Cameron Bogans offers an honest account of a difficult lesson he learned about what is and is not appropriate treatment of women. As his title, "A Conversation Starter," suggests, these are issues that we should be talking about, though doing so—especially when it means expressing vulnerability or mistakes—is often difficult to do. His first-person account of navigating difficult issues, and his courage in speaking openly about this topic, offers hope of starting a conversation about boundaries, assault, and safety in an honest, open way.

In your ENGL 101 or 115 classes, you may have the opportunity to write a narrative of some kind, and while your particular assignment may differ from these examples, there are guidelines of storytelling you can take away from the essays. As you read, notice how students tell their stories—what details they give, how you react or feel when you read, and the effects of their descriptions—and then remember these concepts when you craft your own narratives. We all tell stories in our lives every day, whether as an official assignment or not. Storytelling is an important aspect of culture and social interaction, and learning to craft an effective narrative as part of your writing gives you the opportunity to tell your story to wider audiences.

Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Doesn't Work Hard

Katie Kennedy

2017 Personal Narrative

Reflection

The task for this assignment was to write a personal narrative about an event that was important to us in 5 to 6 pages. I thought it would be difficult to find an event that I could talk about at such a great length, so I initially struggled with picking a topic. After talking about my concerns with my professor, Dr. Russell, I got a better sense of the freedoms I could take with my event and I decided I would have the most material if I used moments throughout a transformation process rather than a single moment. Talking about my experience at GenuWIN Sports Training was certainly meaningful to me because it molded me into the person I am today and it inspired me to take on challenges I would never have dared to attempt without the confidence I gained from Coach Marcy and her staff.

As you can hopefully tell from my narrative, I have endless “moments” from my years at GenuWIN, and so once I began to write, I had no problem filling 5 pages. It was essential that I be very careful with my word-choice because I wanted to honor my memories of Coach Marcy and paint her honestly, but still unique to my perspective. One of the best pieces of writing advice I ever got was from Dr. Russell on this assignment: use more dialogue! People enjoy reading dialogue more than narration, it’s more relatable, and often it tells us more about a character than a descriptive paragraph ever will. I think that was the best tool I used in my explanation of who Coach Marcy is. Perhaps the hardest part about this task was deciding how to end and answer the burning question, “So what?” To first-year writers who have the same problem, I would say be honest, acknowledge the other side of the argument, and try to leave with something emotional and relevant to your audience. Beyond that, try to keep your sentence structures fresh and don’t be afraid to visit your professor’s office hours for a closer review of your work!

Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Doesn't Work Hard

“C’mon old lady! If I can get all the way down, so can you!”

Sweat is dripping down my nose, my headband is sliding down my head, and my legs are burning.

Like drill sergeants, the other coaches call us out by name and drive us forward. There’s no better way to break in girls at a catching clinic than the catcher crawl, the hellish warm-up that has us groping towards the other end of the field in a low squat. “Are you guys tired already? I think some of you are a little OOS!” Coach Marcy taunts us once we’ve all made it and waits to let the acronym sink in. It’s only been 10 minutes into the catcher camp, and many of us are already questioning what we had for dinner. The other coaches give Coach

Marcy a knowing nod and she adds, for those who are new, "Out Of Shape!" Laughter echoes throughout the facility in between puffs of hot breath, and then they have us go back to the other side in the catcher crawl again.

I started attending Marcy's clinics just two years after my first hitting lessons with her. I was 10 or 11 years old when my dad and I first drove out to Marcy's place, GenuWIN Sports Training, in Romeoville. At that time, before we knew all the back roads, it took us an hour. We would pull up to the parking lot as the sun was just starting to fall, and I would carry my bag, always too big for my body, and walk inside. I can't remember whose maxim it was, whether it was my dad's or Marcy's, but I always knew that *I was responsible for carrying my bag*; no one else could pack it or carry it for me.

My dad liked to be early to my hitting lessons, so we would find an empty cage and hit balls for ten minutes. That way, I wasn't coming to Marcy to warm up my swing; it was all ready for her to mold. She would sit on a bucket, toss me a set of balls, and examine my swing with laser vision. Her stare was piercing, but her words were kind. Marcy is Greek and she grew up on the south side of Chicago, so she had a very direct teaching style. Almost everything she taught had a good story behind it. She would always start by saying, "Now listen Tom," even though my dad goes exclusively by Thomas, "If Katie were my daughter, I would have her do *this*." And then she'd proceed to share her pearls of wisdom with us, whether it be a brand of bat to buy or an exercise to do at home.

And there were plenty of exercises for me to do. To name a few: we got a punching bag so I could practice hitting hard at contact. We put up a net in our garage and I would do up to 100 swings a day in the summer off a tee. We wrapped black tape around a green softball so I could practice snapping the ball straight off my fingertips. I would do nightly push-ups to build up arm strength and daily jumping jacks to increase my speed. Of course, I never did any of these all together. But over the years I certainly accumulated my fair share of classic Marcy exercises. Her homework always had a scientific element to it because she truly studied the game, and so everything she had us do was mechanical, with the goal of building muscle memory.

Mechanics was a buzzword in GenuWIN. The coaches would always say, "You need to work on your mechanics," and if you weren't making good contact, chances are your mechanics were "off." I could still name a million drills and anatomize a perfect swing today, without a moment's hesitation. Knees bent, elbows pointed out in a triangle shape, bat held at a forty-five degree angle. Don't tilt your head or you'll see the ball at an odd angle. Watch the ball! Your elbow always moves first, not your wrist—elbow the midget! Bring that hip around! For God's sake, EXTENSION! Extend those arms, that's where you get your power. Extension, Katie, come on, babe. Follow through. Don't watch the ball. *Run.*

Coach Marcy was a scientist, an innovator, and a student all in one. She was always researching new techniques and exercises to improve her players' games. Even though most of her students were in high school or younger, she utilized Olympic training exercises and took advice from D1 college football teams. Above all, Marcy was interested in the spirit of the game and what

drove us to push on. She would throw out motivational phrases like she was flipping quarters at her students, and I caught them every time. "The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender." "It's not the hours you put in, but what you put into those hours. Quality over quantity." "The game doesn't know age, Katie." She would say. "Right now, there are girls who are younger than you and girls who are older than you that are practicing harder and longer than you." "There are three kinds of people in this world: those who watch stuff happen, those who make stuff happen, and those who wonder what the hell happened." Marcy was funny, but moreover, she was incredibly wise about the game and wise about life.

She had always instilled in GenuWIN an enormous sense of positivity. In the winter, she would run her famous high school camps, the Mecca for girls of all shapes and sizes to come on Sunday nights for three hours to prepare for school tryouts. There were girls there that had already signed to Division 1 schools their freshmen year, and there were girls that had never bunted before. "I always respect the girls who come back to my camps." She told us after one of the clinics. "You don't know it all. There's always something you can learn. Stay humble." Just like in her catching clinics, we would warm up with dynamic stretches and start the hour off with challenging exercises. Once you made it across the field, the older girls would cheer on their line, give out high fives, and call out "Nice job, ladies!" "Keep it up!" "Stay strong!" Marcy wouldn't have it any other way. There came a point in the clinics when every girl was shouting and encouraging every other girl in the room. The indoor field was a riot; everywhere you turned, you were being spurred on by strangers who had complete confidence in your success. In this way, there was no hole for failure, there was no place to hide. Your body stepped up to the task, and you performed. I've never felt so sure of my body's abilities as when those girls at the clinic were cheering me on.

There came a moment in her camps when Coach Marcy would grab her bat and everyone took an infield position. And this is when the skin would break. She'd call out your name, you'd lower into a defensive crouch, and then it was show time. There on Marcy's stage, all eyes were on you as she took a softball and shot it at you with an inimitable force. *Bam!* Blink, and you've been hit with a grapefruit-sized bullet tearing towards you at 60 miles per hour. She was an expert with fielding drills: she'd work your backhand, your weak hand, place the ball just a finger's distance from your farthest stretch. She'd hit and you'd react. It was a simple process of survival, but it required every ounce of concentration and effort you had in you. Her favorite students dove for every ball. And once you had it in your glove, that wasn't the end of it. Get up, *quickly*, and make a good, hard throw. "We're going at game speed ladies. A left-handed slapper can make it down to first base in less than 3 seconds. You don't have time for errors." Everything about this drill was *time time time*. Every millisecond was crucial. I would mentally direct my energy towards the ball, and put all my being into a forward motion. This is where I learned how to trust my body.

When it was my turn, the room seemed to hold its breath and the air was silent. Of course, that's probably how everyone felt when it was their turn, but for me, the exercise was a spectacle. I was no rookie at a Marcy camp; she

would twiddle her bat and literally laugh at the satisfaction she was about to get from beating the crap out of me. "I'm going to get you," she'd say snidely. "Bring it on," I'd say with narrowed eyes, and the battle would begin. BAM! A ball shot past my right hand. I dove for it, but it was just outside my grasp. "Again!" I'd force myself up, knees sore, body aching, ready for another rep. Marcy hated when girls messed up and then went to the back of the line. "You stay there until you get it right." She told us. "You are strong, independent women, so stop being big weenies." BAM! The ball hit hard to my left side now, but my glove beat it there. The round shape in my glove, an affirmation of my success, was all I needed to bring myself to my feet again, and with complicated yet effortless footwork, align myself for the throw to third base. The girls in my line cheered, and we would repeat the cycle.

Years later, my glove sits tightly wrapped in the basement. The bats and the net and the punching bag collect dust now, but sometimes they still beckon me to practice. For weeks at a time softball had been a part of my daily regimen; softball was all I did on the weekends in the fall, in the mornings in the summer, on Sunday nights in the winter. I must have spent hundreds of hours at GenuWIN, and I must have heard Marcy say, "Do it right or I'll squeeze your head!" about a thousand times. It might seem that it's all a waste now that I no longer play softball. What did I put all that time and effort into if softball was only a finite dream?

As I go on living my normal life, I can say that those hours were everything. When it's midnight and I still need to study, I remember Coach Marcy. When I'm forty-five minutes into a hellish workout and want to give up, I remember Coach Marcy. Coach Marcy, who taught me how to shake someone's hand and look someone in the eye when I am meeting a teacher, or an employer, or the head of the OT department at Xavier, hoping to be in their program. "When you feel like giving up, give more." I couldn't ignore her voice in my head if I tried.

Questions to Consider

1. Katie begins her narrative with a piece of dialog without letting readers know the identity of the speaker. What effects might this have upon readers? How did you react to this opening line? What response did you have to this dialog along with the description of her physical sensations immediately after?
2. In her reflection, Katie mentions that she was encouraged to use more dialog in this piece overall. What does using dialog do to aid her story? Would this narrative have been as interesting if she had told the story without quoting dialog within it? Why or why not?
3. When reading this story, did you find yourself relating to the experiences described? Or thinking about someone, or some event, that had a similar effect upon you? Why do you think people tend to enjoy hearing and telling stories? What is the role of storytelling in our society?

Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University

Isabel DeMarco

2018 Narrative Argument

Reflection

Originally, I was assigned a paper in my Honors Rhetoric class to discuss the true purpose of education. What was most challenging for me initially was finding something to write about that was both believable and something that I was able to relate to my personal life. I am most drawn into essays and stories wherein the authors incorporate themselves into the pieces.

When writing a piece, I always start by composing an outline. From there, I decide which quotes I want, and once I have those, I start writing fluidly. My first full draft is always awful and chunky. I then read it and think about what did not flow and what sounded bad. With that in mind, I start over and completely rewrite the piece; in this instance, my second write-through was the piece that is now published. I work in the Writing Center, so instead of having it edited there, I brought it to a professor to work through with me.

For first year writers, I would definitely recommend meeting with their professors throughout the semester to review old work and to work on creating their voice. I think that once an author has a developed voice and style, that essays come more easily.

Growing Together: The Importance of Moral Education at University

My first semester at Xavier University has redefined my view of the purpose of a college education. I have witnessed blatant and unapologetic racism first-hand here on campus, and have been changed by it permanently. Photos recently surfaced of a current freshman at Xavier wearing a black facemask with the caption, "Who needs white when black lives matter?" At the same time, it was made public that students in Fenwick had decorated their dorm with a skeleton wearing traditional African clothing while in a position historically associated with lynching. These incidents, especially the first one, hit close to home. The girl involved in the blackface scandal lived across the hall from me and is my best friend's roommate. My best friend, who is African American, was shocked by the photo and her roommate's actions, as was I. We attended the silent protest and the forum held by the university to discuss the event. While there, I heard many people rightfully condemning the racist actions of my classmate; however, I listened to countless people excuse her behavior by saying, "She has the right to freedom of speech, especially on a college campus!" These shocking occurrences forced me to evaluate how my beloved university responded to racial issues and forced *me* to form an opinion as to what I believe the purpose of a college education is. In light of this tragedy, I have come to believe that it is the duty of a university to provide its students with a moral education that

focuses on equality and values while acting as an example as to how students should conduct themselves.

After conforming to the beliefs of one's parents for 18 years, it is not surprising that many people view college as the key time for students to choose their own beliefs and define their own values; university is often the first time students are away from the influence of their hometowns and their families. This can be a great opportunity for people to express themselves and develop their identity. Many students feel safe to explore different religions and their sexuality when they arrive at university in ways which they were previously unable. Historically, universities used to have a larger impact on shaping the values of their students; however, this shifted with the introduction of the women's rights movement and the civil rights movement to college campuses (Arum and Roska 1). Related to this,

In the 20th century, colleges and universities started to move away from educating for character and began to focus on scientific facts and research. The philosophy of logical positivism, arriving in American universities from Europe, asserted a radical distinction between facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feeling, not objective truth). In this perspective, moral reasoning was seen as 'value judgment' and something that was outside the purview of academic institutions. Faculty abandoned character education in favor of scholarly research, and student affairs professionals emerged to bridge this gap for students. (MacElroy 3)

Universities became less concerned with shaping their students and educating them morally than they were with conducting research. This change allowed students to practice their own beliefs and have their own morals while expressing them in public ways. Because of this shift, college has become known as a time for students to experiment and ask themselves what they believe in and what they want to accomplish in their lifetimes. However, some students' beliefs can be incredibly disrespectful and can be the cause of harm to others. This idea of "causing harm" is highlighted by the recent events at our university. Many students, especially minority students, feel unsafe on campus because of the lack of "visual action" that the school has taken in response to the black-face scandal. It is for these reasons that I believe that colleges should make an increased effort to provide students with morals and values rather than letting them loose to discover their own.

Attending Xavier and witnessing these recent events has helped me realize that a university education should direct some focus on morals and values and that universities should act as examples as to how students should conduct themselves. Universities have become institutions where sexual assaults and racist acts come to light, only to be swept under the rug by an administration that cares more about rankings, sports, and profits than about its students well-being and happiness. It is the duty of colleges to make sure that students receive a strong moral education and understand the wrongness of racism and sexual assault:

With many campuses seeing an increase in bias related incidents, alcohol and drug use, and unprotected sexual activity, it is important to return back to strong character education that helps students make the connection between their thoughts and actions. Hedonism on campus is the chaos and disorder of students struggling to internalize moral principles and to develop sound character. In a situation such as this, student affairs professionals can step in and be a significant presence of principled people with shared standards that have the power to reshape a person's character. (MacElroy 4)

Colleges do not have to impose values on students; rather, they should provide guidelines that encourage students to further develop their morals and make good decisions. Colleges have the power to greatly influence the morals of students on campus just in how the administration reacts to certain events. By refusing to disclose how the students involved in these scandals were reprimanded, Xavier University sends the message to its African American students that blackface is okay, while saying to its white population that they will not face repercussions for their actions. In *Our Underachieving Colleges*, Derek Bok quoted David Brooks, saying, "Highly educated young people are tutored, taught, and monitored in all aspects of their lives, except in the most important, which is character building. When it comes to this, most universities leave them alone. And they find themselves in a world of unprecedented ambiguity" (Bok 146). When society tells people that blackface is deeply wrong but a university is seen to refrain from punishing students that perpetrate these racist acts, the school sends mixed messages, perpetuates this aforementioned ambiguity, and fails to create a sense of morality and values on campus. Universities need to take advantage of their power and use it to act as role models for students to shape the morals and values of the student body. Allowing inappropriate behavior to occur on campus is incredibly wrong, and by failing to act, what kind of message is a university sending its students? What kind of example is the school setting? By holding open forums in Gallagher like the one that occurred today and by allowing students to have peaceful protests, students are able to voice their opinions in safe ways while being guided by the university. Following this idea, President of Columbia University, George Rupp, eloquently said that, "What universities can do and have to do is locate moral and religious issues in their historical contexts. There's got to be a sense of a living, changing cultural tradition that students engage and criticize, and, in criticizing, make their own" (Niebuhr). If Xavier takes an appropriate response to issues like this in the future, students will not feel required to retaliate and react with violence and viciousness.

Ultimately, in light of this tragedy, I have come to believe that it is the duty of a university to provide its students with a moral education that focuses on equality and values while acting as an example as to how students should conduct themselves. Universities have the power to change the cultural climate on campus and shape the morals of their students. My university cannot reverse their inaction regarding the blackface scandal and cannot undo the fact that the offender still walks freely around campus. However, this does not mean that my university cannot still grow from this experience. Looking forward from this

tragedy, Xavier can take actions that can foster togetherness and a renewed sense of community among the student body. If the administration focuses on promoting equality and morality through classes like GOA and the first year seminar while holding events that promote the values of the school, students will be able to develop into moral and good people. When the Black Student Association or the LGBTQIAA Association and the university hold events in conjunction, the school sets a standard for student behavior and displays an expectation that all students treat each other with respect, regardless of race, sexuality, or gender. Everyone goes to university to study something different and experience something different, but it is of utmost importance that everyone receive a moral education at university as a means of effectively combating the racism, sexism, and homophobia that is often prevalent on college campuses and across the United States.

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Questions to Consider

1. Isabel situates her argument about the importance of a moral education within a personal narrative and experience. How does her explanation at the beginning of the essay affect the reader, especially those who are from the same campus? How does Isabel move from her personal story to a thesis-driven argument? How does she integrate or come back to her own experience throughout the essay? What effect does this have upon the reader?
2. In her essay, Isabel uses longer quotes in a couple of places. Why might she have chosen to use these particular quotes in her paper? How does it influence your reading of the argument when you encounter long quotes? What are some other ways that Isabel integrates outside information into her argument? How does this work alongside or with her narrative?
3. All controversies have multiple sides, and while Isabel argues that universities have a duty to address morals that support equality, what other arguments can you imagine that are counter to this? How could those counterarguments be addressed in this paper? For an audience that totally disagrees with Isabel's position, what information might convince them? How might the sources, tone, claims, or evidence change for multiple audiences with different points of view?

Drug Toxicity: Second-Hand Effects on an Addict's Sister

Anonymous

D'Artagnan Award 2019 Winner

Personal Narrative

Reflection

After hearing the prompt for the personal narrative, I grew nervous; I am not a very outspoken person and I have never used my voice to change the world—or so I thought. When given the prompt, most students wrote about how they spoke out to change injustices in the community, so I did my best to use my little experience in finding my own voice to put a new spin on the idea. The most challenging aspect of this paper was allowing myself to put raw emotion into what I wished to convey; it is clear in the story that I am not a very vocal person, and so allowing myself to be completely candid and vulnerable was difficult.

Writing this paper required me to write in a stream-of-conscious way, as I wanted to get my actual thoughts into the paper. After I had completed the preliminary steps, and after composing my first paragraph, the one about playing duck duck goose, I was able to build from there. I also originally did not include the monologue, hoping to leave it up to the audience to interpret as well as finding it difficult to recall what had exactly been said that day, but ultimately found it enhanced the impact as a whole piece. The main idea I tried to incorporate was done through the use of impactful language and building from a body paragraph; I often start papers from the introduction or beginning, but in this case found that building from a central and impactful body paragraph made the process quicker and more efficient. I also had family revise it after two drafts were completed; in total I had two family members correct as well as a roommate. In English 115, my professor, Dr. Frey, also had us peer review in class, and she left her own feedback as well, which was extremely helpful; she introduced the idea of the monologue which really anchored the paper.

Writing this paper was much more difficult than I had anticipated, but not in the sense that the actual style of paper was difficult. I found it very hard to share such a personal story, but in the end this story allowed for an important topic to be discussed. When writing a narrative, I encourage students to hone in on raw emotion they may feel for something, whether it be something personal or communal, but do not let the emotions you feel inhibit what you wish to convey.

Note: *Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, the author has requested that she remain anonymous. Names and locations have been changed to protect the privacy of her family.*

Drug Toxicity: Second-Hand Effects on an Addict's Sister

When my mom asked me to come with Cora, my oldest sibling, and her to Recovery Road Rehab Facility, I felt as though I had been kicked in the stomach. Since my brother left home for treatment for his addiction, I did my best not to think about him or his situation. Over the years I had become quite adept at avoiding painful subjects and thoughts, but my mother asking me to do this would make me face those dark thoughts head on. I knew the right thing to do would be to “support my brother” and take the hour-and-a-half drive out to the countryside, but I had become so adept at restricting my feelings and I knew going there would break down my entire facade. I told her I would think about it as she poured over books researching the “12 Steps to Recovery,” trying to find her own way to understand what our entire family had been subjected to. Eventually she guilted me into the family therapy session, and I found myself in the car with my head pressed against the back window quietly listening to my oldest sister and mother talk.

As I sat there folded into myself on the black leather seat, I thought about the 8 years I had lived with a brother addicted to drugs. It started simply, as it usually does, but as his use escalated to things such as heroin pills, my pain did as well. I am the middle child in a family of seven, and I had always been known as the talker. As a child I was always making noises and rambling about every significant and insignificant detail of my day to my parents, my siblings, or anyone who would listen. As I grew older, and my brother fell deeper into “the black hole,” I began to lose what had once been an essential part of me. My voice, once so strong, clear and happy, became something of a curse. Words were always a way for me to express my emotions, as they are for many people, and due to this, they had an uncanny ability to trigger tears, anger, smiles, etc. Being in a family with an addicted member, your emotions tend to seem less important compared to the constant worry about that sibling dying from a drug related overdose, accident, or illness. Gradually, I dwindled into the ghost of that happy little blonde girl who could make friends with a tree. This seems to ring true for all families plagued by addiction; children tend to cope with these situations by withdrawing and becoming frightened observers. We lose the power in our voices in lieu of the dark cloud that washes over our parents' faces, the anger that coats our older siblings' tongues like cold metal, and as the innocent light fades from our younger siblings' eyes. We forget the important impact our small voices can have; we forget the influence we have on others because we are too occupied watching members of our family succumb to their deepest, darkest desires, as they slowly rot before our young eyes. The pain of watching my charismatic, handsome brother slowly become less coherent, less connected, and much darker, tends to make me pause, even now, when I think about it. It is enough to shake the very depth of my heart into a sponge that merely soaks in anguish and worry like thick, black tar.

After the long drive from the city into rolling hills, I found myself in front of a large, sterile, yet friendly looking building. My breath caught in my throat and my eyes grew hot from tears. I walked behind my sister and mother, using them as a barrier between myself and the facility hiding my brother, who I was not sure I even wanted to see. We entered the building and I felt as though I was entering a battleground. A staff member put a neon pink bracelet on my wrist and we shuffled into the bright waiting room, the pleasant surroundings only serving to sharply contrast the turmoil boiling in my stomach. The only sense of true illumination was found in people's eyes as they gathered their family members in their arms. Jack was one of the in-patients descending the stairs, making my heart grow a bit lighter. It is true "you don't know what you have until it's gone," and here he was: after weeks of talking to his disembodied voice on the phone, I could finally hug and talk to him. Despite the hate I felt for him, the love far overshadowed it. After the various activities of the day, we, along with several other families, were corralled into a small room with our counselor, Angel.

We sat in a circle, like one would imagine kindergarteners would to play duck-duck-goose, and that is exactly what I felt like: a small child dreading and waiting to be picked next to play the game. My face was already tear-stained and red from listening to families and friends look at their addicted brothers, sisters, fathers, or mothers ask the question of the day, "How did my addiction affect you?"

All of their collective stories brought back each memory, in perfect detail of my brother spiraling down, further and further, as each day I grew quieter and quieter. I vividly remember the day it started when I was in fifth grade, with the accident and death of my brother's friend, Liam Smith. The next day at school during current events, my class discussed what happened while I sat in the back willing myself not to cry: my brother had been in the fatal accident as well and no one knew. Thus began the silencing of my voice; I asked myself, "How could my pain possibly compete with his after everything he went through as a mere sophomore in high school?" He grew worse as I entered high school, falling asleep mid-sentence, becoming temperamental, eating less, and rarely coming up from the basement. I grew afraid of him to the point I did not even want to be in a car he was driving; I feared for my life when I was with one of the people who was meant to protect me, always. I also began to feel the pressure of my parents to excel in school, sports, extracurriculars; I felt they hoped I would make up for the things my brother lost. Little did they know I began to crack piece by piece while attempting to make them proud. I began to not only lose my voice, but also my passion for life. My saving grace, of course, was found in the arms of a boy, as most good love stories are, and Will became my outlet for all the pain I felt during this time. It was like applying a cold compress to a burn—it alleviates the pain for a bit, but only as a temporary measure for the third degree burns I had suffered. I thought that my love story might save

me like all those chick-flick movies, until I realized I was only growing more removed; I could not avoid Jack forever. My boyfriend helped me try to cope night after night until eventually I went to Cora, my oldest sister. She was happy I talked to her about self-harm and the pressures my parents placed upon my shoulders, but I never brought Jack, my brother, into the equation.

During my junior year in high school, there were nights my brother was kicked out and nights he spent hospitalized. Finally, during the beginning of my senior year, one of the scariest, if not the scariest, but best days of my family's life occurred, and my brother got his wake up call, hitting rock bottom. He was in a car accident, and from there was sent for the help he desperately needed.

Senior year was a time meant for celebration, but even with him in rehab, I constantly worried. The pain came to a head while I was sitting in my English class. A knock came, and I was called out of class. The teacher assured me I was not in trouble, and automatically my mind went to Jack: Had he overdosed? Had he died? That walk to the office was the longest of my life, and when I finally got there, surrounded by my principal, my dean of students, and my guidance counselor, I broke into tears. Why didn't they tell me why I was here instead of me waiting each agonizingly long second wondering if Jack was dead? They assured me again I was not in trouble as they slid one of my assignments in front of me. I was asked, "Why did you write your paper on this?" Until that point I didn't realize what I had been feeling may have not been vocalized, but was instead reflected in my schoolwork. I sobbed onto the desk and finally got out, "I thought you were going to tell me Jack was dead." Over the course of the school year my work became increasingly dark as I struggled to deal with my brother's addiction; the work I produced became so stark and ominous that my teachers eventually took action to get me help. While they tried to convince me to try therapy, I insisted again that talking does not change the facts, and that my problems were not nearly as important as my brother's. I did not need to "talk" about what was happening in my life when I was so comfortable being silent; I told them that, "I had been mourning the death of my brother since his addiction began. Talking about it now would do nothing to change what I deal with." This was the beginning of finding my voice despite the torment. Walking on broken glass is difficult, but as your feet grow accustomed to the pain, it becomes easier to tolerate, just as I was growing used to getting through everyday wondering if it would be Jack's last.

I found myself back in the room, as Angel turned to Jack, saying, "Ask Rachel the question."

"How has my addiction affected you?" he said. I had thought about all the stories I would tell him and all of the guilt I would unload on him, but instead, after eight years of silence all I could do was cry. I thought at this point I would have come up with all of the awful things he did to me and make him feel all the pain he caused, but looking at him across the circle all I could think of were

the nights I laid awake wondering if he would come home from the hospital, or walking down my long school hallway dreading the news I felt sure I would hear. Finally I was told to use the voice that had been screaming inside of me for the past eight years, finally I was able to speak, and after taking a deep breath I shakily began my own narrative.

“You are my older brother, and I am your younger sister. We were not meant to switch roles, where I would become the one waiting to hear you come home safely. I spent nights being a parent to our youngest sister, while trying to protect her from all the destruction you caused. And even through all this, every night you spent in the hospital the only place I wanted to be was by your side. You will never know the helplessness I felt lying at home crying on the floor just because I never knew which visit to the hospital would be your last. You have never had to worry about losing me, or Cora or Dominic, or Emily. But everyday for the past eight years, we have lived in the uncertainty of not knowing whether you will come home or if we will find your body in a ditch on the side of a road. Do you know what it’s like being a 15-year-old in high school never knowing whether your brother will see you off to prom like you imagined? Do you know what it’s like never being able to talk to anyone because your friends would never understand or what it feels like when they get ‘depressed’ due to a few extra school assignments, while I sat at home everyday wondering if you’d be alive in the morning? And never being able to go to mom and dad because I felt that the way your addiction affected me would only make me feel selfish? I was completely alone, and even now when it is ‘okay’ for me to tell you how I feel, I still feel like the most selfish person in the world for feeling sorry for myself. I was supposed to look up to you and instead my most vivid memories of you are so full of pain that they will never leave my head. I don’t even know if you remember being so incoherent while driving me in the car that we almost crashed while you screamed at me about wanting to kill yourself. Just so you know, it really sucks having to watch you kill yourself. I know this addiction affected the entire family, but at least they had someone to talk to. I was left alone for the past eight years watching you rot. Mom and Dad may think I never understood, but I was the first person in the family to know how bad it was; you were so high your sophomore year you couldn’t even recognize who I was. You taught me how to make bongos when you should have taught me how to throw a football. You will never ever be able to understand what you put me through.”

After years of staying quiet, I was the one person who could make my brother say, “I am speechless.”

Up until that point I had planned on slowly pouring my pain on him like acid, so he could feel the way my body steeped for eight years lying dormant in that same acid, as life’s joys passed me by. But at this moment I like to think I underwent an important change. One thing we as a society often miss when speaking out against injustices is how that society does not acknowledge the respect the other party, as a member of the human race, deserves. For eight

years I wanted Jack to feel the pain I was forced to endure at his hands, but the way I finally used my voice was so much more effective without resorting to biting words and harsh insults. The importance of using one's voice strongly, clearly, and lovingly without being drowned out by others was discovered by me on this particular day at Recovery Road.

Everyday, families are affected by addiction, disease, death, and suffering and in the wake of this; the casualty count is not just the one addict, the one cancer patient, or the depressed parent. Family suffering is like a bomb going off, and while the person at the epicenter is the most injured, the bomb can and will hurt those in the parameters. All wounds must be tended to, and I learned this the hard way. Siblings should be empowered to express themselves; in my case, my small voice was enough to silence my brother, and I assure you this is no easy task. In the case of my addict brother, I felt like talking about my pain was betraying him. After all, I lived such an easy life, how could I be so selfish to think I deserved any bit of the attention he needed? But I learned, as all sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, partners, families learn as they face addiction, losing your voice in the face of adversity, not only hurts you, but your entire family.

Questions to Consider

1. This student author focuses her narrative on a single day, though the experience has spanned years of her life. While she frames the story around the day her family joins her brother at the rehab center for a family therapy session, the writer weaves details about her brother's years-long addiction, and her reaction to it, into the tale. What is the impact of focusing on one day, instead of a chronological retelling of events? How do the flashbacks and background details help us better understand the author's reaction to the therapy session? What examples in her descriptions were more powerful in telling her story?
2. The student writer talks about losing and finding her voice. How is the author able to illustrate the power of voice? What kinds of language does she use to demonstrate the concept of voice? What other stylistic or descriptive strategies does she use to highlight voice—both explicitly and implicitly?
3. This essay describes the second-hand effects of a family member's addiction. In her cover memo, the student author advises students to "hone in on raw emotion" when composing a narrative. What are the challenges of writing about something so emotionally wrenching? How does tapping into that emotion affect the writer, as well as the audience? Is it necessary for a narrative to convey intense or profound emotion? Why or why not?

A Conversation Starter

Cameron Bogans

D'Artagnan Award 2020 Honorable Mention

Personal Narrative

Reflection

The moment my professor gave the prompt to write a personal narrative about sexual abuse, I immediately thought about this story. I tried to write about anything else, but this was the only thing I could think about, so I gave in and wrote it. It was definitely challenging to write; the most challenging aspect being not giving too many details but still telling the entire story. I also couldn't write this paper the way I'm used to writing long written assignments. Normally, I plan out my papers with a detailed outline before truly writing my rough draft, but for this paper, I had to sit down and focus on getting everything that happened on paper, and then edit it later. So, I wrote my zero draft, revised it myself, and then took it to the writing center to be reviewed and revised before finally submitting it.

Most of the revisions I did had to do with the paper's organization. I tried to be as thorough as I could to make the story flow and find a good place to transition into my argument. I would later go to the writing center to have my grammar and mechanics reviewed. Normally, I don't like to open up and get this personal, both in my writing and in my everyday conversation, but I felt obligated to do it this time. I recognize that not many men in my position speak about these things and share this kind of perspective when engaging in conversations concerning sexual discrimination and abuse. So, while my experience isn't one that I'm fond of, through this narrative, I have found a new level of appreciation of it.

A Conversation Starter

All I can do is simply tell my story as I remember it and let you take what you will from it. It is one I hate, but it is mine nonetheless. So, without further adieu, this is my honest story. It is about the time I sexually assaulted my friend. Now understand, I don't tell this story for the sake of telling it. I do it because my actions, in part, were due to my lack of education and conversation on the topics of sexual abuse and sexual expression growing up. Often times, adults had taught me that sexual interactions of any kind were wrong or hinted that they are something that should be shied away from. I wasn't taught how to express these emotions and desires in healthy or mature ways, so when I finally did, I made mistakes that I can't take back. After my experiences, I believe that we as a society would benefit from initiating conversations surrounding sexual abuse and expression with young men during their pre-adolescent years. These aren't conversations we should dance around, especially for young men.

It was my sophomore year of high school. It was the second month of school, so everyone had already gotten out of that phase of being excited to see each other while simultaneously dreading the school work and nights of little sleep. I had come to enjoy my daily routine, and my classes weren't too hard. I had many friends, so I was constantly surrounded by people I knew and liked, and I had a lot of free time at home. Though, my favorite part of the day wasn't actually being at home; it was riding the bus. I loved the bus. Some of my closest friends were there, so we got to be loud and obnoxious, play music on our speakers, and whatever else we wanted for the duration of our ride. The bus was also where I got to see her, Raquel. We met at the beginning of our freshman year and clicked pretty fast. I had a crush on her at that time, and she knew it too. At the time, I knew that she also had feelings for me, but I was too scared to act on them, so when she got a boyfriend at the end of freshman year, I had nothing to be surprised about. I didn't shoot my shot, so it was my own fault. Though by the time sophomore year rolled around, my friend revealed to me that over the summer, she had just recently broken up with her boyfriend. Needless to say, I was excited. I wanted a second chance and now I had one, so I started talking to her more often and made plans to ask her out. Every year, the county held a fair that lasted for two weeks. It was one of those places that everyone could go to regardless of age. I told myself, "That's where I want to take her," but I never did get the chance.

I was walking toward my third period class that day when I saw Raquel standing at her locker trading textbooks from her locker to her book bag; I went over to say hi. I don't remember what we talked about, just that we were entertaining a quick conversation and enjoying each other's company. I playfully teased her about something, and she responded with a playful slap to the face (it was kind of hard, but honestly at that time, she could've hit me with a broomstick, and I still would've reacted the same). "Do that again, and I'll smack you back when we get back on the bus," I replied with a smirk. "You won't get the chance. I'm driving my own car now," she said as she walked away. *Damn.* I was looking forward to catching her on the bus, but I guess it didn't matter. It's not like I was confined to one place to talk to her, though I was disappointed that I wouldn't get my chance to prove her wrong. Except that I did. And sadly, for the both of us, I took it.

About 2 hours later, I was walking to my last class of the day with my best friend Devin and as we're conversing, we saw Raquel and her friends walking in our direction toward the building we had just exited. I knew her friends well; they were mine too, but not like they were to Raquel. They were more like inseparable sisters. As they made their way closer, I smirked and raised my hand, as if to signal for a high-five, and then right as she passed me, I let my hand fall down, and I smacked Raquel right on the butt. I didn't turn around to see her reaction. I didn't hear her friends react. I just kept walking with Devin, smiling and laughing at him hollering and laughing over what I did. To the two

of us, it was nothing more than a laughing matter. To me personally, I was just flirting and showing affection. To Raquel and her friends, my action meant something much different.

To my surprise, not long after I got on that bus, Raquel soon followed after and sat two seats in front of me, not looking at me, not saying a word. I didn't get the hint. Not long after, the bus started moving. I got up and sat next to her, and before I could get much out, she flashed me a look I had never seen from her. She wasn't just mad; she was *pissed*. She told me to get the hell away, and when I asked why she told me. "First you slap me like that right in front of my friends, and now you wanna come over here as if nothing happened?! You didn't say sorry or even bother to check and see how I felt about that!" She told me to go away again, and this time I listened. I was speechless and very confused. *Why was she so angry at me? Was what I did so wrong?* From the time I was little, I had seen dozens of men slap their girlfriends and wives on the behind. I had seen my father do it, babysitters, and various people on TV do it. So, what made this so different? At that time, I couldn't see it, yet it didn't stop me from sending her a paragraph-long apology text and trying to call. I didn't understand what I did, but I knew that I was sorry that I hurt her feelings. I didn't know how to fix this, so I did something I hated and asked for my mother's advice.

She listened as I explained the situation. My mother had worked as a police officer and had taught criminal law for years, so she had seen and heard much worse than I was telling her, but still, I didn't know how she was taking my story in. Her expression was very neutral, neither calm, nor angry, but I knew she was putting on a poker face to keep me talking. Normally, I wouldn't tell her any of this, but this was important to me. Raquel wasn't just a love interest; she was my friend too. When I finished she stated the obvious: "You messed up." *Thanks*. She explained to me that what I did was sexual assault and that even though we were friends, that didn't excuse what I did. She further explained to me what sexual assault and harassment were and that they were legal offenses as well. She also explained that Raquel had every right and reason to report me. "Well if she did report me, then would that mean I'd be a labeled sex offender?" I asked. And my mother looked at me and said, "Whether or not she does, it doesn't change the fact that you did it, and even if she doesn't, her and her friends might still look at you that way," This was my first time having a conversation on this subject. No one had ever talked to me about sexual assault or harassment before. The closest conversation I'd ever had to it was being warned to stay away from sex offenders, and now I was being told that I was one. It hurt to hear that.

While I do own my mistakes, this shouldn't have been my first conversation about sexual abuse and sexual expression, but the craziest thing is that I'm not alone. There are many guys who were like me and didn't have these conversations until more recently, when sexual discrimination became a much more popular conversation in the wake of the #MeToo movement. These

teachings are more often taught to girls, whereas boys learn them with time. This is something we need to change. Now, coming from a Southern Baptist Christian background, I understand the irony and difficulty in teaching an adolescent about appropriate sexual behavior, especially because Baptists tend to preach abstinence, but it needs to be done. At the same time, I also understand that these topics are very complex and difficult to talk about, especially with children. However, doubt or religious beliefs shouldn't be used as an excuse to withhold valuable information from anyone, especially a child that needs it. When boys aren't taught how to appropriately seek out or express their desires, they mimic behavior that they observe from other men, thus continuing the cycle of ignorance and masculine toxicity currently alive. Adult men and women collaboratively need to start having real conversations with young boys about sexual expression and abuse. If you are one of the many people who want to help change the culture and create a safer environment for women and young girls, it starts and ends with the education of young boys.

Questions to Consider

1. While we may not always consider how titles work to frame a story, essay, or argument, because it is the first piece of information a reader encounters, it can have an impact on how readers interpret the information they find in the rest of the piece. Even before Cameron's narrative begins, his title hints at what is to come or how he hopes readers will react to his story. How does the title of this essay frame your understanding of the narrative, even before you read it? How does the title work rhetorically? Can you think of other titles that might also work to get across this message? How might changing the title completely lead to a different reading of this narrative?
2. In a personal narrative, the ethos of the speaker can be a very important aspect of how an audience reads a story. In this narrative, Cameron discusses a mistake he made in a way that, hopefully, sparks more dialog and encourages other people to reflect upon their actions. How does this influence your perception of the writer? How is ethos established in a narrative that reflects honesty, courage, and difficult truths? What specific words or phrases can you find in this narrative that help to establish the ethos of this writer?
3. This narrative begins with an introductory paragraph, followed by the story itself, and ends with a concluding paragraph. How does the framing of this story affect what the audience takes away from it? How would this story change if the introduction and conclusion were omitted? What is the purpose, then, of the introductory and concluding paragraphs in this narrative? How do these elements work rhetorically?

Category: Common Assignment

The Common Assignment is an essay that is required in all ENGL 101 courses at Xavier. Although the topic for this assignment may be different from class to class, the general parameters, goals, and learning outcomes are the same. Students in all sections of ENGL 101 read a common set of readings on the topic that offer different viewpoints, and then form their own arguments or positions based upon these readings, as well as additional outside research. The Common Assignment is typically composed (or at least revisited and revised) near the end of the semester so that students in ENGL 101 have the chance to build their writing, research, and argument skills by the time they craft and complete their Common Assignment essay.

This essay has multiple purposes. First, it gives all students in ENGL 101 the chance to explore a standard set of readings with their classmates before forming their own position on an issue. Second, because this assignment is required across all sections, it provides continuity in both knowledge and skills in order to complete, which means that all students who complete ENGL 101 are coming away from that class with a common skillset that they can take with them into their other courses. Third, it allows the Writing Program to have shared assignment criteria to assess the writing skills of students in ENGL 101 to make sure that we are meeting our promise to students and the university to successfully teach a set of learning outcomes for this course. Last, it allows students to test their own abilities in research, writing, and argumentation after practicing these skills all semester. By completing the Common Assignment, you participate in an experience shared by all ENGL 101 students and help the Writing Program improve the instruction it provides to you and to future students at Xavier.

The three essays included in this section come from Emily Carmack (“A Message to Candidates,” 1st edition), Henry Emch (“Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote,” 2nd edition), and Connor Haskell (“The Benefits of Being Alone,” 4th edition). The first two selections both engage with the idea of voting, and even rely on a common set of assigned readings, though they take very different stances. In Emily’s essay, she addresses political candidates directly, crafting an argument about what candidates need to do to engage young voters. This essay is specifically directed toward a particular audience—potential political candidates—and demonstrates the role that audience plays when creating a rhetorically effective argument. In Henry’s essay, he supports the claim that not voting, when chosen consciously, is a legitimate form of political discourse. In a culture divided by strong political opinions, Henry argues that there is a place for neutrality. Drawing upon historical and philosophical precedent, his position offers a third-space within bipartisan tensions. In the third essay, based upon a different topic and set of readings, Connor explores study habits for students, specifically asking questions about how introverts

Category: Common Assignment

may differ in their approaches and preferences for learning activities. While much research focuses on the importance of group work and collaborative team interactions, he points out that this perspective may not apply to all people. By asking these questions, Connor addresses issues that are common to many college students (how to best study) while offering a perspective that challenges the extrovert-driven society we live in.

All of these essays show how students can adapt the Common Assignment to their own perspectives and positions while demonstrating their ability to craft an argument based upon outside information and research. This assignment helps give first-year writing a common basis for comparison and assessment, showing that each of our students emerges from these courses with a skill set that they can carry with them into their other courses and future learning.

A Message To Candidates

Emily Carmack

2017 Common Assignment

Reflection

For this paper, I read through the prompts given to me and chose the topic that I was most interested in and wanted to learn more about. Reading through the prompt, I was curious why young people don't vote as much and, if possible, we could blame the candidates for lack of engagement. First, I read through the articles of Robert Klotz and Abby Johnson, and I took a lot of notes. Sometimes it helps me to print out the articles and use a highlighter to note the sentences that grab my attention and which sentences could be used for quotes. I used the EBSCOhost database, from the Xavier Library website, to find my next article. I narrowed down my search using key words like "millennials," "young voters," and "candidates." The next source I had was from the Pew Research Center because I wanted to get a recent statistic of the population of Millennials. After I gathered all my notes, I organized them into sections and, eventually, paragraphs. During my writing process, my essay was edited first by myself, then a few of my classmates, and finally my English professor. The critiques were all beneficial and crucial to creating my final draft. My advice to first-year students would be the more people who read and edit your essay, the better it will become, but you, as the author, always have the final say. Write clearly and authoritatively, making every word count. Remember your words hold great power.

A Message to Candidates

We are the generation of smart phones, medical technology and cures, the Internet, legalization of gay marriage, and the first African American President of the United States. We are multi-taskers, students, social-minded creatures, culturally and racially diverse, and individualistic. Nevertheless, we are considered indifferent and disconnected from the political world by candidates running for office. Millennials are the biggest population of people since Baby Boomers. According to Pew Research Center, the Millennial population (people aged 18–34) is estimated to be 75.3 million, while Baby Boomers' numbers were around 74.9 million. This generation is powerful in numbers and political involvement would undoubtedly affect our world. Although young voters are perceived as disengaged, candidates need to engage Millennials to increase voter participation while encouraging political activism.

Millennial voting participation may be declining because of inconvenience, no instant gratification, distrust of the government, lack of interest, or disengagement by candidates. In this day and age, we strive for convenience and immediate results. Voting is sometimes inconvenient for college students who

live out of state, requiring them to obtain an absentee ballot. It is also a process that takes days or weeks to complete, so voters must wait patiently for the outcome. Many young people have a general distrust of the government, due to growing up during a politically problematic era. Abby Johnston states in her article "Political Peril: Why Millennials Don't Vote," "Two terms of Clinton marred by the high-profile affair, two divisive terms of George W. Bush and the war in Iraq and two underwhelming terms with the Obama administration have been all that most Millennial voters have ever known. The lack of engagement makes sense." This skepticism of the government is rational and occurs in older generations as well. In addition to distrust, most young voters believe that their vote does not count in the long run. Millennials understand that the voting issues affect them, but they are "discouraged by a political system they have watched fail for the last two decades" (Johnston). They are accustomed to believe that the government will do whatever the government chooses to do, regardless of the peoples' opinions. We can not necessarily blame them for believing this, because, in recent years, this belief has been proven true.

In addition, some argue that young voter participation is declining because of lack of interest; I believe that this is not always the case. Tobi Walker in "Make Them Pay Attention To Us: Young Voters And The 2004 Election" states "... online voter registration efforts such as Rock the Vote and Declare Yourself reported that more than two million young people around the country downloaded registration forms" (26). Walker also explains how young people have allocated public engagement into two worlds: civic and political (26). Millennials are active in their local communities through volunteering, fundraising, and being consumer activists (26). Many are involved in political clubs in schools, volunteer at food pantries, and organize canned food drives. Some students fundraise for charities, while others refuse to buy certain products because of unfair pay to workers or animal cruelty. In contrast, they are less likely to be engaged politically through individual monetary contribution, political party involvement, voting, and contacting public officials directly (26). The absence of young people in the political process results in a lack of invitation and engagement by campaigns, parties, and sponsorship groups (27). Some young people are apathetic towards politics, but many do indeed care. Millennials are stuck; they are not voting because of the lack of engagement by candidates, and the candidates are not engaging the new voters because they are not voting (Johnston). Candidates must realize that they would be more successful if they campaigned to this demographic group, acquired their votes, and engaged them as American citizens.

Political leaders and candidates are not expressing issues in a way that resonates with Millennials (Walker 27). Young voters are affected by and interested in the concerns facing the world today, but from a different perspective. They care about health care, but along the lines of access to health insurance, not health benefits for seniors (31). Education is a main focus, but specifically the affordability of colleges and universities. Millennials are concerned with the same issues as the older generations—such as the economy, wars over seas,

education, health care, and unemployment—but in a different manner. They tend to focus on matters that significantly affect them. More than 75 percent of casualties in the Iraq war were under 30 years old, the unemployment rate of 18–42 year-olds is twice that of older adults, and student loan debt increased by 66 percent from 1997 to 2002 (28). These statistics prove that young adults are more touched by these issues than politicians appear to believe. Candidates need to view these topics through the Millennials' line of vision in order to connect with them (31).

Politicians must think like Millennials if they want their votes. They need to air political campaign ads when young voters watch television (such as during *Grey's Anatomy* or *The Bachelor*), visit college campuses, recruit young people interested in politics to be outreach coordinators, and continuously reach out to both registered and unregistered voters (Walker 31). Young adults must be included in their mobilization efforts. Phone calls, political party events, and campaigning door-to-door can be both effective for older and younger adults (32). Social media and pop culture are other important ways to reach young adults (Klotz 24). Robert Klotz explains “young adults come to understand political issues from ‘many genres (especially entertainment media)’ and personal discussion” (25). Millennials are less likely to be exposed to politics through traditional media, such as nightly network news and newspapers (29). Instead, online chats, polls, blogs, and meeting invitations are more effective ways to reach the younger generation (36).

Once a politician captivates the attention of a young voter, one challenge exists: keeping it. To gain Millennials' notice and loyalty, ongoing registrations and mobilization should be implemented (Walker 30). Candidates need to continue to encourage political activism even on years without elections (30). Political activity such as communicating with public officials, writing letters, signing petitions, lobbying, and demonstrating peacefully should be heartened by political figures wanting to engage the public (30). Technology can and should be used to track, mobilize, and motivate new voters. As much as 50 percent of Millennials today identify as independent, which is extremely desirable for candidates (Johnston). These new voters have swinging tendencies, and the more likely a candidate can win over a voter, the more likely the voter is to identify with that party affiliation (Johnston). Candidates need to reach out and involve young voters both during election and postelection years. Furthermore, they should inspire them to become more politically active in their communities and in the political world.

Millennials, the next upcoming generation of voters, need to be empowered and engaged by candidates to unleash their political power. The decline of voter participation among young adults is reason for concern and must be addressed and fixed. Candidates should invite young voters to partake in democracy, voice their opinions, and be both locally and politically involved. Political figures must look through the lens of Millennials and connect with them through issues that are relevant and important. They should use media that are popular for young voters and challenge them to do more. For a generation that represents

nearly one-third of the population, these young adults are transitioning into older adults. Therefore, the votes of Millennials can and will alter the country—if politicians listen and respond.

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Questions to Consider

1. Emily frames her essay by directly addressing a particular audience. How does this focus shape the way she crafts her argument? What might have she done differently if she were trying to convince a different audience? For instance, what would have been different about Emily's essay if she had chosen to try to convince Millennials to vote?
2. If you were a political candidate, would you find this argument compelling? What could you do as a candidate to heed Emily's call to action? Would you want additional information in order to be convinced? Why or why not?
3. Emily mentions that she received feedback from many different people during her drafting process and that this feedback helped her improve her work. If you were offering peer review to Emily, what advice would you give to her about this paper? How would you help her make this argument even more effective?

Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote

Henry Emch

2018 Common Assignment

Reflection

My essay was inspired by an experience I had last November in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. At that time, I was part of an intentional community, and was living in a large house with about 10 other people. The day after the election, my predominantly left-leaning housemates were all flipping out about the results. I, however, had adopted a more neutral political stance. I found it both frustrating and off-putting to have to listen to my peers' demonstrative opinions without being able to respond honestly in turn (lest I run the risk of being attacked for holding a minority viewpoint). My intention with this paper was to try and remove some of the stigma surrounding political neutrality, specifically in regard to non-voting.

To young writers, my best advice is to think critically. Try to develop your own ideas apart from whatever happens to be most popular. Don't listen too much to your detractors. Usually, the truth is not going to be fit for public consumption. As Noam Chomsky said, "Either you repeat the same conventional doctrines everybody is saying, or else you say something true, and it will sound like it's from Neptune."

Subverting the Dominant Paradigm: Why Not to Vote

In the United States, it is assumed that political engagement requires a certain degree of awareness and participation. Touted as individual freedoms, activities such as voting, contacting representatives, and protesting are strongly encouraged. Political scientist Russell J. Dalton references an early account of American citizenship given by Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830s: "To take a hand in the regulation of society and to discuss it is [the] biggest concern and, so to speak, the only pleasure an American knows" (qtd. in Dalton 53). Political involvement is defined almost exclusively as taking some kind of positive action—striving to achieve community-oriented goals, for example, or espousing an ideological viewpoint. In light of this, non-action is seen by the dominant culture as fruitless and self-indulgent. According to Abby Johnston, data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that "people between the ages of 18 and 24 have voted in presidential elections at consistently lower percentages than any other age group" (Johnston 3). Young people in America, who make up one of the largest non-voting populations in the country, often come under heavy fire for their perceived lack of interest. However, the argument that non-voters are lazy or apathetic ignores the idea that disengagement might have some intrinsic value.

There are many alternatives to the overly action-obsessed mindset of mainstream politics. Non-voting, when done consciously and with specific intent, is a legitimate form of political discourse.

It might seem difficult to imagine non-voting as anything other than irresponsible, especially considering the divisiveness of the current political climate. But disengagement, far from being a merely passive device, can be used effectively when responding to crisis. There is a long historical precedent for opting out during times of great political upheaval. The Chinese poet-philosopher Lao-Tzu produced his most famous work, the *Tao Te Ching*, a collection of mystical aphorisms, during a tumultuous episode known as the Warring States period. Lao-Tzu, in response to the overwhelming violence generated by contending political factions, adopted a lofty, dispassionate outlook. The ethereal opening lines of the *Tao Te Ching* stress the impermanent, ever-changing nature of reality:

The tao that can be told
is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named
is not the eternal Name. (Lao-Tzu 1–4)

Lao-Tzu understood that political strife may not be the most accurate representation of reality, nor is it the only lens through which to see the world. From a cynical point of view, politics might only be a petty game played by those struggling to maintain control. The ideal government, according to Lao-Tzu, is humble and self-effacing to the point of being barely noticeable. Lao-Tzu's position, which questions and undermines the machinations of the powers that be, is still relevant today.

Whether adopting a dispassionate attitude or not, choice—the choice of what to do or what not to do when confronted with an issue—is at the center of political engagement. The act of voting has become synonymous with freedom of choice. But is choice really at the heart of voting? Voting, just as much as non-voting, should involve conscious reflection on the part of the individual. But many voters have only a limited understanding of the political processes in which they are engaged. The problem is not resolved when marketers try to rebrand voting as “hip” or “cool,” with the Rock the Vote campaign of the 90s, which attempted to lure Gen Xers to the polls being one notable example (Johnston 2). Government agencies, when they attempt to become more “hip” and “user-friendly,” are actually doing a disservice to voters by assuming that they are unintelligent. Presidential elections, driven by simplistic propaganda disseminated through ad campaigns, do nothing to elevate the level of political discussion amongst voters. True civic responsibility can only come through critical thinking, and critical thinking cannot be marketed to a mass audience. The average voter, unconsciously influenced by the slick promises of political spokespersons, may not be as free as they would like to think.

When the dominant culture is so oppressive that it fails to recognize the needs of individuals, withdrawal is sometimes the only honest form of protest that remains. Dalton touches on protest as a form of political participation. Protesting, he says, “not only expands the repertoire of political participation, but ... is a style of action that differs markedly from electoral politics” (Dalton 64). While Dalton is specifically referring to organized movements aimed at affecting policy change, non-voting and disengagement could also be construed as forms of protest. The United States, formerly a collection of British colonies, is a country founded on the right to secede. One such American who exemplified this spirit was the nineteenth-century philosopher and author Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau famously retreated from society to live a solitary existence in a cabin he had built for himself near Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. In his book, *Walden and Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau frames his reason for leaving society as a quest for truth:

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life, living is so dear; nor did I wish to practice resignation, unless it was quite necessary. (Thoreau 85)

Regardless of whether or not it is accepted by the public, non-voting has meaning insofar as it remains a form of protest, a deliberate rejection of values that no longer have meaning on an individual level.

Politics reveals a partial truth about the world, but it can never represent the whole truth. Political narratives are relevant to some, and might even be compelling for the vast majority of people today, but just because a majority of people holds something to be true does not make it so. Non-voting and disengagement are necessary for the development of critical thinking. Political candidates, in their attempt to appeal to the lowest common denominator, wind up treating their constituents like children. Civic responsibility requires the effort of making conscious decisions in an attempt to separate truth from fiction. When the noise of a false reality drowns out your ability to think and make rational choices, then it may not only be wise, but essential, to leave that world behind.

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Questions to Consider

1. Henry mentions in his Reflection that his position for this paper arose from the social setting he was in during the 2016 election cycle. Does knowing this give you more insight into the position Henry holds in this paper? In what ways might your own environment and social interactions influence your opinion on this issue? What are the benefits and challenges to holding an opinion different from those around you? Or taking on a “third” position that is different from seemingly everyone’s?
2. In his essay, Henry uses historical and philosophical sources to support his position. How does this contrast to the other sources he uses? What types of sources do you find more compelling? Does that change with the context, tone, or audience for an argument? When is it effective to include historical or philosophical works in a paper?
3. Reading this essay, are you convinced of Henry’s claim that “Non-voting, when done consciously and with specific intent, is a legitimate form of political discourse?” What other types of support, reasons, or evidence might make this position even more compelling? If you were to offer a counterargument to his position, what arguments would you present? How might Henry refute them?

The Benefits of Being Alone

Connor Haskell

D'Artagnan Award Honorable Mention

2020 Common Assignment

Reflection

During writing my common assignment, it was not very difficult to come up with my topic. I wanted to make a compelling argument that not many people would agree with. I wanted to write a paper that went against the social norm; however, writing a paper that is against the social norm is, at times, difficult because there's a plethora of research that goes against the claims I made in my paper. I approached this paper like most of the papers I wrote this year. I first came up with my thesis and started to compose my outline around that thesis. From there, my paper fell into place and wasn't that difficult to write, as we have been writing arguments all year. Some advice I would give to first-year students is take your time on these papers. It is tough to write these arguments and papers in one night. It could have worked in high school but here at Xavier teachers can tell when a paper has had the proper amount of thought and has received the proper amount of revision a paper needs. Take your time on these papers, and your grades will show!

The Benefits of Being Alone

Students across the globe have libraries in their cities where they can go to study and read. For hundreds of years, libraries have been providing a space for students to gather and prepare for class assignments. Why do students continually rely on libraries? The answer is simple; it is because libraries provide students with a peaceful environment to study on their own and not be distracted by the outside world. When a student studies with friends or is surrounded by the multiple distractions that are part of everyday life, it is difficult for that student to thrive and create his or her best work. On the other hand, when a student is provided with a study environment with no distractions, the student is able to succeed to their maximum potential and shine in the classroom. Being able to escape from the tug of Instagram, Facetime, Snapchat, Netflix, and the many other distractions students face on a daily basis is invaluable to success as it allows for time to simply focus on the topic in front of you. Without a doubt, students are more productive and more creative in their own study space with quiet surroundings.

Many teachers and professors suggest that working in groups can lead to a more creative product. Often, however, this is not always the case. While working in groups, it is difficult for every group member to voice their ideas and have their voice be heard. In fact, sometimes in a group setting, whether it be from insecurity, low self-esteem, or some other similar quality, some students

are unwilling or unable to share their ideas. As a result, potentially excellent suggestions are left unspoken. Sarah Sparks, in “Children Must Be Taught to Collaborate, Studies Say: Researchers Explore Group Work in Class,” discusses how “students who are naturally more outspoken...tend to be more likely to be primary leaders (Sparks). For a student that is shy, however, they may not feel comfortable with sharing their ideas for fear of being judged for their ideas. They may also fear that the more vocal member of the group will dismiss and embarrass them. In addition, in a group setting, there can be added pressure on students as they realize that others are depending upon them for their work and vice versa so that “conflicts often arise when a group of people works together. Different personalities aren’t always compatible, especially when you have one or more opinionated members” (Frost). When a student is not allowed to thrive in their own study space, creating their own work individually, struggles for that student may develop. Moreover, when students are not able to present their own work and focus on what they need to do, frustration, not only for the student but also throughout the group, may also emerge. When students are given their own space to work on a project or study for a test individually, however, they can be more successful as they can explore their own thoughts and work with no distractions.

In addition to the difficulties for some of learning with a group, the negative impact of other types of distractions when studying cannot be ignored. For example, many students suggest that listening to music while studying or while in class is beneficial. In fact, earbuds have become almost another body part for today’s student. Research proves, however, that this is not the case. In fact, a lack of quiet surroundings can only lead to distraction and with distraction comes a lack of focus. “New research out of the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff says listening to music can damage your performance on certain study tasks” (Briggs). The study suggests that when listening to music, students are simply not focused on the work in front of them. When someone is distracted, they cannot produce their best work. Students who have their own study space with quiet surroundings, on the other hand, can tap into their creative mind and deliver the best results.

All of this can be especially true for a student who is considered an introvert. In her *TED* Talk titled “The Power of Introverts,” Susan Cain discusses the difficulties of being an introvert or someone who is quiet, tends to want to do things alone, and work in a “low-key environment” (Cain). She speaks of how growing up as an introvert, people always looked down upon her, trying to make her to be more of an extrovert. She also suggests that quiet study spaces are critical for the introvert. Because of the amount of group assignments in today’s classroom, introverts may feel left out. “For the kids who prefer to go off by themselves or just to work alone, those kids are seen as outliers or problem cases,” Cain says. This happens even though “introverts actually get better grades and are

more knowledgeable, according to research” (Cain). In fact, introvert qualities have led to great successes in the classroom and outside of it, as some of the brightest people in the world are introverts.

While having access to study spaces and quiet surroundings have demonstrated proven results for students, many argue that when a student is isolated, they will not learn how to work well with others and will eventually struggle in the real world. In fact, some researchers such as Caruso and Woolley or Mannix and Neale claim that “Group projects can help students develop a host of skills that are increasingly important in the professional world” (qtd. in Eberly Center). There have been many arguments that have made compelling points on why group work is beneficial for someone and why studying in groups are beneficial. However, for many, it is still difficult to retain information on their own while in a group or ensure that their ideas are presented. Sparks suggests that while “at its best, collaboration in the classroom can help students think more deeply and creatively about a subject and develop more empathy for others’ perspectives. At its worst, group tasks can deteriorate into awkward silences, arguments or frustration for the one child who ends up doing everyone else’s work” (Sparks). Working individually in a private study space with quiet surroundings allows students to retain information better as they are actually learning the information on their own.

Students who use study spaces and take advantage of quiet surroundings have been seen to receive improved grades and can better understand the information taught in the classroom. When a student is given the ability to have their own study space, void of distractions with quiet surroundings, this student is set up for success. Study spaces provide an element for students to escape the outside world of distractions and provide them with quiet surroundings to focus on their work. When a student can focus on their own studies, this allows them to obtain and retain information more efficiently and have more individual, creative thoughts while working or studying. They also are less likely to be ignored or talked over by the more extroverted people who surround them. Many schools, in support of this argument, have created dedicated, quiet study spaces for their students to get their work done and focus on their studies. When students isolate themselves from outside distractions for periods of time, who knows what they could achieve in or outside the classroom?

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Questions to Consider

1. In contrast to a genre such as the Narrative Argument, classical arguments such as this one do not tend to bring in personal information or speak from a first-person perspective. In considering the issue presented here, do you find it more convincing to have the information presented objectively, from a third-person perspective? How would a personal story have added to, or detracted from, Connor's position? Do you make any assumptions about the writer's interest in this issue, based upon the topic? When a writer doesn't use "I language," how do you form the ethos of that writer?
2. Connor offers various perspectives about learning environments and the relative benefits of working in groups versus solitary studying. What is Connor's main argument? What is the purpose of the counter-arguments or other views that he offers in this essay? Would his argument have been as convincing if he only argued for his position and never presented ideas that were different from his own? Why or why not? What is the purpose of including counter-arguments in an argument essay?
3. This essay addressed dilemmas or issues students often face when it comes to how they study and learn best. As a student yourself, what information do you take away from this essay? To whom might this argument be directed? Who might need to hear this information or consider these arguments? Do you consider yourself part of that audience? Why or why not?

Category: Reflective Essay

Reflective writing requires students to take a step back from their own writing, thinking, and typical ways of interacting with the world in order to reflect upon how they do what they do every day. By reflecting upon the writing process, students are required to articulate the choices they make, the experiences they have had, and how they have arrived where they are by the end of the semester or academic year. Contemplating in this way can encourage meta-cognitive awareness, which can allow you to more deeply understand the way you think, learn, and write.

You may be assigned various types of reflective writing in your ENGL 101 and 115 courses, as this type of writing can be adapted to suit many different purposes. Your instructor may ask you to write a reflective letter when you turn in your assignments so that your writing process is more transparent. Or, you may be asked to write a reflective essay at the end of the semester, looking back on the writing you have done and what you have learned. Reflective writing can take the form of more formal essays with writing prompts and page requirements, or it may be assigned as informal blog entries or discussion board posts as homework. Because reflective writing has the potential to help increase awareness of your writing and thinking process, you may want to keep a journal yourself that engages this type of writing, even if it is not required for your class. Meta-cognitive awareness of how and why you write the way that you do can support you in gaining skills, highlight your challenges, and increase the likelihood that you will be able to transfer a skill from one setting (such as ENGL 101 or 115) to another context.

The selections offered here—“Take the Risk” by Christina Peterman and “But Remember, This is College, and This is a Whole New World” by Caitlin Meier—address you, the first-year college student, directly, offering insight and advice from students who have “been there” before. In the first reflective essay, Christina offers advice to first year students and examines her previous work, including the Rhetorical Analysis of hers that is featured earlier in this book. (See: “How Cassidy Argues Snowden’s Heroism.”) Christina uses her assignments from the semester as a way to examine her thinking, writing, and research process, noting how her position on her topic changed over time based upon the information she encountered. She quotes from her own work in this piece, which demonstrates to the reader how her ideas are reflected in the writing itself. Her essay culminates in advice to first year writing students, to take risks and put in the work to create high quality compositions.

Caitlin reflects upon her experiences in the first year of college in her essay, which was written in an ENGL 101 course as a final exam of sorts, where students were asked to use the final exam period to reflect upon their experiences as writers in their first year writing course. Timed writing is a skill that is helpful to learn, and engaging in a reflective written assignment like this for a final exam calls upon the skills students have learned throughout the semester.

Category: Reflective Essay

While there is not time to do significant revision or peer review, reflective essays can be a valuable way to re-think the learning from the semester, organize thoughts quickly and effectively, engage in pre-writing, and create a finished essay. Caitlin does this in her essay, which is specifically addressed to incoming students, and offers advice for succeeding in the first year of college.

There are many kinds of reflective writing, and in fact, you have been reading reflections from students throughout this book at the beginning of each student essay selection. As you read this piece, think about what you might learn from those who have come before and how you can integrate that wisdom into your own process. Through sharing knowledge, we can all help one another on the “write path” as you begin your college career.

Take the Risk

Christina Peterman
2017 Reflective Essay

My biggest struggle this semester was choosing a topic to focus on for the Rhetorical Analysis. This is because I knew that topic would be one I worked on for nearly the rest of the semester, so it needed to be one I was passionate about, one I could write a lot about, and one I truly enjoyed learning about. All of this made it quite difficult to narrow it down. When I finally chose Edward Snowden, I had one big reservation going in. This was because I already knew a lot about the topic and thus had already formed an opinion. I was afraid that this would preclude me from being able to keep an open mind and address both sides of the argument.

In the first paper I wrote on my topic, the Rhetorical Analysis, I believe the one-sidedness of my opinions was evident. The word choices I made when discussing the side I agreed with would clearly lead the reader to be able to see my opinion. I did attempt to account for this however, by clearly attributing the thoughts in most of my sentences to Cassidy, such as when I said “Cassidy spends the duration of the article arguing why Snowden’s actions were justified, necessary, and even heroic.” Because I knew so much about the topic going in, the research I did for the Rhetorical Analysis was not enough to change my mind.

As the semester progressed, however, the amount of research I had to do greatly increased. I had to do copious amounts of research in order to write my Annotated Bibliography, and my research had to focus on both sides of the issue. Even this, however, was not enough to change my mind. It did help though, that as in the Rhetorical Analysis, I was able to attribute most of the opinions to those that wrote them, but I still had some concerns regarding word choice. At the end of the paper, as I wrote my Synthesis Essay, which could not be attributed to another source, my opinions were made clear with my explicitly saying “in the end, I plan to come to the conclusion that Snowden’s actions were justified and heroic.”

As I compiled my Major Research Inquiry, however, my perspective began to shift. I organized the material and in doing so needed to consider all of the information I had collected. As I completed this process I realized that my thesis needed to shift, I had come to a new compromise. My thesis changed from Edward Snowden is a hero to “Snowden acted in a desperate manner, and the way in which his actions could have helped terrorists reveal a deep flaw within them, but his actions were necessary to the growth and development of this country as a beacon of justice that should be beyond reproach.” Looking back at the way my perspective shifted throughout this entire process, I would advise anyone about to go through this process not to be afraid of choosing a topic they already have opinions on. As long as they are willing to put in the extra work necessary to keep an open mind, there should not be a problem.

Take the Risk

My one other piece of advice stems out of the way I came to my compromise in my final paper. One of the reasons I was able to see the issue clearly enough to come to a new conclusion was because of the way I chose to organize my argument. In class, three types of argumentation styles were presented to us: the Classical style, Rogerian style, and Toulmin model. Each of these models brought a different strength to the table and yet none of them suited my topic perfectly. Therefore, I chose a model somewhat in between the Classical and Rogerian, and I believe this is what allowed me to keep an open mind. Because I did not strictly follow the Classical, as I would have done if I had been forced to pick one, I was able to come to some sort of compromise in the end like I did.

In short, my advice is not to be afraid to take risks. All throughout my writing process I was worried about how I did not stick to any specific style. This can be seen in my conclusions in the reflective letter I wrote on the Major Research Inquiry, in which I noted that, "If I had more time, I would continue work on organization and flow. Although I have spent the majority of my time working on it and went to the writing center to discuss it, I am still unsure about the effectiveness of how I wrote it, perhaps because I did not stick to a specific style." Even though I was so worried and spent so much time on organization, I do believe that it paid off in the end. Therefore, I would advise anyone in a similar situation not to be afraid to take risks with their writing, because in the end they can pay off.

But Remember, This Is College, and This Is a Whole New World ...

Caitlin Meier

2018 Reflective Essay

Reflection

In reflecting on the English Composition course, my classmates and I were instructed to evaluate our performance, growth, and improvement over the course of the semester, and then compose an essay aimed at incoming first year students who would be taking English Composition during the 2017–2018 school year. We would have the entirety of an exam period to draft, compose, and revise our work, which would then be turned in at the end of the hour.

In my brief pre-writing stage, I jotted down my memorable Xavier experiences outside of the classroom: meeting new friends, attending retreats, March Madness, etc. Next, I formed a list of important academic lessons learned during my two years at Xavier, including how to use the electronic library, practicing appropriate study habits, utilizing time management skills, and attending professors' office hours.

From there, I began composing the draft, imagining as if I were writing a letter to a freshman student, sharing with them advice which could influence their first year at Xavier in a positive way. At this point, I found it a bit challenging to write professionally, yet personally and casually. However, I quickly was able to finish the essay, concluding in what seemed most appropriate—Go X!

It is my hope that this essay might encourage and assist first year students in not only their English Composition course, but also their entire first year experience as a whole.

But Remember, This Is College, and This Is a Whole New World ...

As you pack up the belongings in your childhood room, and say goodbye to your lifelong friends and adoring family, your mind is racing— trying to imagine where your next big adventure might take you. *What will my roommate be like? Do freshman closets have enough space for all of these shoes? Does the caf have anything good to eat? Will I actually make friends?* As the overwhelming process of transitioning from a carefree high school graduate to an incoming freshman in college transpires, and the exciting whirlwind of Manresa is concluded, the first day of classes your freshman year will await you with one single concern—*What is college all about?*

Wrapping up my sophomore year at Xavier, I can fully attest to the fact that college is going to be the best time of your life (thus far). Get involved, find your niche, and make this big place seem a little less big. Always be open to meeting new people—you never know who could be your best friend around here. Stand in the student section and cheer on our team, and when you cheer, be sure to cheer loud. Fall in love with every new, exciting opportunity you're faced with, and make Xavier your home. But at the end of the day, keep in mind the sole reason you are here—to succeed academically.

Succeed academically. What does this mean? In high school, you may have been the type of student who could study 30 minutes before your test, whip out an A+ paper the morning of its due date, attend class regularly, and bring home a report card your parents were proud to magnet to the refrigerator. **But remember, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** College courses will challenge you in unexpected ways, and require nothing less than the upmost dedication in, and out, of class. According to the University of Michigan-Flint, “for every one credit hour in which you enroll, you will spend approximately two to three hours outside of class studying” (“Surviving College”). In addition to acquiring strong study habits and putting them to use, to succeed academically in college, you must learn how to write.

Write? You're probably thinking that you've known how to write for the majority of your academic career. (Trust me, I thought the same.) **But once again, remember, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** Writing at the college level is an art that takes hours upon hours of practice: planning, rough drafts, peer reviews, rewording, rephrasing, rewriting ... again, and again, and again. So when the first day of the semester is a go, and you find your seat in English Composition, prepare yourself to let go of the high school writer you once were, and embark on the journey of becoming the blossoming college writer you were born to be.

To the Incoming Freshman at Xavier: Three Tips to Successful College Writing

1. **Wikipedia is not a source.**

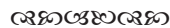
One of the most helpful aspects of Xavier University is that it is overflowing with resources. When your first college paper is assigned, this is golden information to have on hand. Xavier's electronic library is easily accessible, and provides students with a plethora of sources at the touch of a screen. Accessed through the “Current Students” page on Xavier's website, students then click the “Library” link and are able to search among hundreds of thousands of academic books, articles, journals, and sites in order to fulfill their academic needs. So when your professor reminds you that “Google is unacceptable” and “Wikipedia is not a source,” you'll know exactly where to go to find the information you need to write that A+ college essay.

2. Write to your professor.

Imagine you're a young child once again, and you're writing a letter to Santa Claus. Remember him? The jolly old man who slid down your chimney and left presents under your Christmas tree to await you on those magical Christmas mornings? You wouldn't write him a letter sharing the "bad things" you had done all year, right? You'd butter him up with all of the good things—"I was really good all year, Santa. I even shared my toys with my little brother." The same goes for college writing. Sometimes, to earn the grade you desire, you have to write what your professor wants to hear. Your philosophy professor most likely does not want to read a paper seasoned with details regarding why Plato's *Republic* is morally irrelevant and unjust, and though you might think otherwise, it's in your (and your grade's) best interest to attempt to understand the Socratic dialogue, and produce an essay that will be appealing to the professor of the course.

3. It's all about improvement.

You've written your first college essay, and submitted it last week. Today is the day! You're heading back to class and patiently awaiting your professor handing back the excellent grade you earned. He sets your paper on the desk in front of you and you flip it over ... C+. *What?!?!* You might be feeling as if those late nights typing, revising, restarting over and over and over were all for nothing, but this is far from the case. Sometimes, the grade we earn on the first (and sometimes second and third) paper is not what we have desired. Our prior education has trained us to write in a certain fashion, and adhering to it, we expect the same outcomes as attained before. **But again I remind you, this is college, and this is a whole new world.** Do not let this C+ define you as a "bad college writer." Instead, allow it to propel you forward, providing the opportunity to learn from your mistakes and continue in the process of successfully writing in college.



Xavier University is a remarkable adventure unlike any other. As a freshman student at Xavier, you will learn more about yourself than you ever thought possible. You'll learn what kind of person you want to become, the kind of people you want to surround yourself with, where you're able to study the hardest (and it's probably not in the dorms at Brockman), what tastes the best in the caf (go check out Steve's sandwich line), and what it takes to become the best student you can be. **And yes, this is college, and this is a whole new world,** but Xavier University will fully equip you to take this college ride by the horns, and will mold you into a strong, successful, steadfast student and individual who is capable of changing the world. Go X!

Works Cited

"Surviving College." *The University of Michigan-Flint*. 2017. www.umflint.edu/advising/surviving_college.htm.

Questions to Consider

1. For this assignment, Caitlin had to pre-write, draft, organize, and revise the entire essay in one sitting. In her reflection on the assignment, she discusses the process by which she approached this task during the final exam period. How do you prepare to write in a timed-writing situation? What are some other strategies that you might employ when you are called upon to write an entire essay in one sitting? Looking through her essay, can you see evidence of her pre-writing process? How do you think her approach helped her write this essay in the amount of time she was given?
2. In her essay, Caitlin had a clear audience in mind and wrote her essay specifically addressing that audience. As a member of that audience, do you feel “included” in her advice, as though she is speaking to you? What strategies did she employ in order to bring the reader into her essay? How might her focus on audience have influenced the way she drafted her essay? Can you find specific places in her essay where it is clear that she has her audience in mind? Also, she repeats the idea that college is “a whole new world” throughout her paper. What effect does this have? How does this repetition add to the cohesiveness, message, or tone of her paper?
3. What if Caitlin had been asked to write a reflection addressed a different audience—for instance, a committee for graduate school admission, a hiring manager for an internship she wanted, or her second grade brother. How might her choices in tone, purpose, style, language, etc., have changed in those circumstances? In what ways will the audience addressed alter the way a writer chooses to write? Do you think that this essay is more effective in the second person, informal tone that Caitlin chose? Or would it be more effective as an “objective sounding” formal essay? Why?