This assignment builds on the comprehension and paraphrase skills that were the focus of the summary, and adds the critical thinking skills we have been practicing in class: understanding how arguments work and assessing the quality of logic and evidence. In addition to understanding sources and putting their ideas into your own words, it’s essential to understand how an argumentative source works, and how well it works, before you can respond to or use its ideas. Due Monday, February 26, and worth 10% of the course grade. Submit a hard copy.

Choose one of these essays for this assignment:
- “An Immigrant Writes,” pages 26-27 of Practical Argument
- “The U. S. Should Adopt Income-Based Loans Now,” pages 546-548
- “In Defense of Bottled Water,” pages 665-66
- “The Carnivore’s Dilemma,” pages 692-95

Analyze and evaluate the essay’s argument. Cite your source according to MLA style.

Unlike the one-paragraph summary, this task will result in a full-blown essay of your own, with your own thesis (a claim of how well the writer made his/her case) and support (analysis of the writer’s strategies and evidence). See the back of this handout for reminders of what to consider. Depending on the length and complexity of the argument, it may be appropriate to address every point the writer makes, or it may be better to select only those points that best illustrate your conclusions (examples of poor argument, or good argument, or some of both to show that it’s mixed). You should be able to do a good analysis of this short essay and address its most salient points in 600-900 words (2-3 pages).

What Your Grade Will Be Based On

Is the main idea of the essay correctly identified, clearly stated, and attributed to the author?
Is an overall evaluation of the argument stated?
*Is that evaluation supported/explained with analysis of points, evidence, logic, and strategies of the argument?
Is the analysis effectively organized, including an introduction and conclusion?
Are all ideas paraphrased appropriately or quoted accurately?
Is a Work Cited page included?
Are grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling correct, appropriate, and effective?
Does it follow format guidelines? (double-spaced, etc.)
Tips for Writing an Analysis

Unlike the summary assignment, the analysis asks you to make judgments about the essay in question. However, confine your assessment to the strengths and weaknesses of the way the writer argues the point; don’t argue for or against the position yourself.

Be sure you are clear on the main point or purpose of the essay, and state this somewhere in your introduction; also be clear on the main supporting points. Making an outline of the essay may be helpful.

Carefully consider the support given for each point.

- Identify the types of evidence and points offered (e.g., personal experience, statistics, examples, authorities, etc.).
- Consider the quality and the quantity of evidence and reasons offered and the logic that connects them.
- Be alert to other persuasive strategies that may be used (e.g. emotional appeal, ethos) and how the writer responds to opposing viewpoints (or doesn’t).

Remember that you can agree with a writer's opinions even if the argument in support of them is poor, and you can disagree with even a very well-argued position. If your natural inclination is to disagree with the essay, work hard to find the strengths in it; if you are inclined to agree, make a point of asking tough questions.

- Try to find weaknesses in the logic or the evidence.
- Think of objections that someone with a different position might make.
- Ask yourself what aspects of the issue the writer has not addressed.

See how well the argument holds up to these challenges. No argument is 100% watertight, but a good argument will make you work pretty hard to poke holes in it, and leave you with holes that are at the heart of the disagreement.

Then, determine what your overall assessment of the argument’s quality is, and write an essay in which you put forth, and substantiate, your assessment.

Practical Argument includes two examples of essays analyzing an argument, one emphasizing the logical argument (pages 71-73) and one emphasizing the rhetoric (104-106).

Using and citing the source: When you refer to ideas in the original argument, remember to paraphrase them adequately. If you choose to quote the original wording, put this in quotation marks, be sure to quote exactly, and give the page number of the quotation in parentheses. Add a Work Cited page giving the citation for the essay. Note on the citations: The readings in Practical Argument are examples of one of the more complicated citation challenges. For now, I want to ease you in to doing citations, so I will create the Works Cited list entry for each of the essays for this assignment and post them in D2L. Copy the appropriate one for your paper.