

Developing critical thinking and writing : a methodology

Preliminary work on draft

Day 1

- 1) Read the assignment question
- 2) What is your automatic/immediate answer to it?
Rephrase the question to what seems more important to you if necessary, and make one sentence to respond to it.
- 3) Read the articles. For each article, read the text thinking of filling in the table here ----->
- 4) Highlight the arguments that did convince you. Are they supporting the same thesis or are they supporting different theses? If they support different theses, it's ok, you can be convinced by opposite or contradictory ideas sometimes.
- 5) Now that you know better, check your answer to question 2. Do you still hold the same ground belief? If yes, ask yourself if there is a better way to summarize it in one sentence again. If not, write your opinion in one sentence.
- 6) Justify your opinion (i.e. your thesis) via the arguments that you found convincing in your readings and which

support it. Make sure the structure of the argumentation is solid, and that each argument adds a new dimension to your thesis. Once you are fully satisfied with the text, leave it aside.

General thesis of the author:				
#	Argument	Type of argument	Mode of argumentation	Is it convincing? Why?
1				
2				
3				
...				
Is the order of the arguments convincing?				
Do the arguments complement each other well in the structure of the text?				
What important information is missing?				

Day 2

- 1) Imagine you are a completely different person, and that your beliefs are the opposite of what they are today. Other gender, other age, other life experience, other socio economical situation, other family, other nationality, other religion.
- 2) Read the text you wrote in Day 1. Read each argument and write a counter argument for it by taking this new person's perspective and explaining why what you wrote in day 1 is wrong. Make sure it is very convincing.
- 3) Now, write the counter thesis to the one you had the day before in one sentence. Once you are fully satisfied with the counter arguments and thesis, leave the text aside.

Day 3

- 1) Read the two texts you wrote during the past two days, and read the assignment question again.
- 2) Imagine you are the truest version of yourself. What is your opinion about the question? Write it in one sentence.
- 3) If that opinion is the same than the one you had during Day 1, then explain why the arguments you had then

are more convincing to you than the ones you had in Day 2.

If the opinion has changed, explain which arguments of Day 2 convinced you.

Writing the essay

- 1) Write up the final assignment using the texts you wrote during the past two days. Make sure the text is clearly separating Day 1 and Day 2 opinions (make at least two different paragraphs, and that through reading, both sides are very convincing). Use the Day 3 elements to write your conclusion.
- 2) Read the essay overall again and check the fluidity of the read. Try to improve the overall style, grammar, spelling and vocabulary. Add other facts to complement your argumentation or check theories that could complement your position. Include emotions to strengthen or weaken some aspects.
- 3) You are done! Congratulations! 😊 You can give yourself a pat in the back! You will probably get an excellent grade, and you have just done something extremely difficult and enriching: you opened your eyes a little wider. Thank you.