

ENG 1213: The Basic Argument

DUE



See WebCT assignment for due date; Attached DOC or RTF file via WebCT

READINGS



- Unit 1 Essay Assignment Handout
- ["Cherries" Assignment](#)

- [MLA Documentation PowerPoint](#)
- [Essay Development Packet](#)
- [The Rhetorical Triangle](#)
- [John Donne, "XVII Meditation"](#) (p. 411 in our anthology)
- [Robert Frost, "Mending Wall"](#) (p. 119 in our anthology)

All readings plus supplemental materials are available on the class website under [Unit 1](#).

RESEARCH



Use outside, credible sources where required. If your argument is based on common knowledge, you may not need outside support.

Your paper must be a minimum of 2 pages (@ 600 words) following correct MLA style formatting.

THIS ASSIGNMENT IS WORTH 100 POINTS.



GUIDELINES

Read John Donne's "XVII Meditation" and Robert Frost's "Mending Wall" in our anthology. Choose one of these to work with, and identify one abstract principle in the text you choose. Explain it to the reader, and then argue for or against that view, arguing your case by giving your reader at least 3 points (topic sentences) to support your position. You must also bring in examples to help clarify your position and provide backing for your stance. Use current events to do so.

This is very similar to the "Cherries" assignment. If we were still using that poem, I would identify an abstract concept in the poem such as insensitivity. I would explain how the author uses insensitivity, defining it clearly to my audience. If I agreed that many people are insensitive to the plight of others not only in other parts of the world but just down the street, as Stryker argues in his poem, I would then need to prove it to my reader by showing them examples and explaining why this is so. I would not stop there, for I have to have a reason for bringing this to the reader's attention. I would then want to offer some cautionary note about what the repercussions for such actions may be. This cautionary note usually goes in the conclusion, though there may be bits of it in each body paragraph tied specifically to the example I am using in those separate paragraphs. See example on next page.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

The essay should have an introduction, at least 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You must support your position with at least three well-developed and well-supported claims. These main discussion points will become the topics of your body. In your thesis statement, you must make your position clear with a clearly defined subject and attitude.

In addition, you must:

- use Standard Academic English with strong verbs and specific words to convey your meaning.
- follow page format guidelines and proper MLA documentation.

You may assume that your **audience** for this assignment consists of **intelligent, college-level readers**.

Sample Paragraph:

Lucien Stryk clearly sees insensitivity in the way modern people only look at the world through their own problems. He writes, “I want / to care, I mean to, but not / yet, a dozen cherries / rattling at the bottom of my bag” (565). The speaker obviously knows that he is being selfish, yet he is easily distracted by the cherries in his own bag. Like him, people are too often so consumed by their own needs and desires that they lose perspective and compassion for others. CEOs are good examples of this. Corporate America is full of top-level administrators who earn millions of dollars a year. According to United for a Fair Economy, a non-profit, bi-partisan group, CEO’s earned 344 times what an average worker did in 2008. Yet when companies suffer financial setbacks, rarely do CEOs take a paycut. Recently, Americans have been shocked and outraged at the stories of corporate executives receiving perks even as their companies ask the government for bailout money:

Last week, as former Merrill Lynch CEO John Thain was agreeing to resign from Bank of America, news broke that he had spent more than \$1 million redecorating his office, including paying \$800,000 for a celebrity designer and spending \$87,000 on an area rug. All this while Merrill was collapsing -- the bank reported a loss of \$15.31 billion in 2008 -- and the newly merged Merrill Lynch-Bank of America was requesting more aid from the government. Thain had also doled out \$4 billion in executive bonuses to favored Merrill employees just before the merger. Just last week, the Treasury Department agreed to give Bank of America \$20 billion in additional aid. Separately, it was revealed earlier this week that Citigroup was in the final stages of purchasing a \$50 million private jet -- after receiving \$45 billion in public TARP funds this fall. (Shakir, et al)

To make matters worse, Citigroup announced in late 2008 that it expects to lay off 52,000 jobs by early 2009 (Dash). The money Citigroup planned to spend on that jet could have been used to keep those 52,000 workers employed. This is an all too common scenario today in corporate America, and until corporations begin operating under fair practices, America’s economy will always be susceptible to the problems it currently faces. If the corporate model is to excessively reward the very few at the top and not to even provide reasonable cost-of-living pay and benefit increases to those at the bottom, then people will not be able to spend money that will stimulate the economy and keep businesses thriving. It’s also a simple matter of respect and compassion. Why would we want to support a system that encourages the very worst sort of greed and crassness? Making sure that American workers get paid a fair wage, and keeping corporate salaries reasonable is not a threat to capitalism as some suggest. Rather, it is a way to prevent the current insensitivity that leads to the problems in Stryk’s poem.

(This essay would include a works cited page that lists the full info for the 4 sources cited in this paragraph: Stryke, United for a Fair Economy, Shakir, and Dash).

**ADDITIONAL**

You may make an appointment with me (or email me) at any phase of your assignment to discuss any ideas or problems you may be having. I am more than willing to look at drafts at any stage of development. Please consult the information in your syllabus about scheduling appointments in order to do so. You may also schedule an appointment in SSC’s Student Success Center with a writing tutor to gain valuable feedback on your draft.