

Honors American Literature Essay Assignment

The Question: How does one construct an effective written argument?

The Challenge: We have seen how the writers of Early America constructed effective arguments for independence from England, it is appropriate that you try to emulate their achievement. Please research and write an argumentative essay that utilizes some of the rhetorical techniques we have identified in the writings and the characteristics we have identified as effective for strong persuasion. The topic should be a controversial local, national or global issue.

Some of the tools and techniques you should consider using are:

- Clear, well documented logic
- Parables and aphorisms
- Quotes from authoritative people
- Comparisons and contrasts
- Specific references to historical events
- Examples
- Allusions to Biblical and historical figures and events
- Rhetorical questions
- Predictions and warnings for the future
- Call to Arms constructions
- Any or all rhetorical devices you find useful and effective

The essays should be a minimum of five paragraphs, with an introduction and conclusion sandwiched around at least three argumentative paragraphs. Your essay should have at least three separate lines of reasoning. Some lines of reasoning may require multiple paragraphs to develop. Also, please write an analysis of the rhetorical devices and rhetorical strategies you used to construct your essay.

A rough draft should be done by Friday, November 18.

The essays will be shared in class and handed in on Monday, November 21.

Minimum Quality Standards:

As well as meeting the above mentioned standards, students should also address the following standards:

- The essay convinces the reader of the author's authority on the subject.
 - The essay shows that the author knows and relates to the audience.
 - The essay has appropriate rhetorical devices.
 - The author gives clear examples
 - The author has the tone fit to capitalize on the situation.
 - The author backs up his argument with facts, quotes and/or historical examples.
 - The author knows and refutes the opposite point of view.
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