

LU7: Sample Textual Analysis Essay Assignment

Instructions: Read the two sample student essays carefully and answer the Response Questions. Before reading each essay, please review the brief comments I've provided below as they will help you better understand how these essays can work as models for you.

Comments on the Sample Essays: I've provided two very different sample essays for you, and each illustrates a unique approach to the Textual Analysis essay:

- **Essay 1 (Point-by-Point Organization):** The essay titled "Racial Segregation: Still Making an Appearance" (which analyzes "Still Separate, Still Unequal" by Jonathon Kozol) develops the analysis by making claims about the author's methods. That is, she does not move linearly through Kozol's essay. Instead, to support the thesis, the student makes main points about the essay's rhetoric and then develops each point by providing and discussing examples from throughout Kozol's essay.
- **Essay 2 (Linear Organization):** The essay titled "Rhetorical Analysis of 'Why Games Are Good for You'" analyzes Steven Johnson's essay linearly. That is, the student begins her analysis at the beginning of "Why Games Are Good for You" and then moves through Johnson's essay by analyzing the author's approach section by section. As she does so, she also steps back and analyzes the effect of how he moves from one type of appeal to another and why he organizes his appeals in the order he does.

Note: You can use either method of development depending on the points you would like to make in your essay. Please be aware, though, that using the second method (linear organization) can sometimes lead to mere summary of (or retelling of) the essay. Be sure that if you analyze the essays linearly, you focus on discussing what method the author uses, why he or she would use this method, and how it would affect the audience or build the argument.

Response Questions: Answer the following questions for *both* sample essays.

1. How effective do you think the introduction is? Why?
2. What is the student's thesis statement? Write it here.
3. List the student's main points (to support the thesis).
4. What stood out to you as particularly good about the student's essay?
5. How do you think the essay could be improved?
6. Which of the two student essays do you think offers a clearer and/or more insightful analysis? Why?