

Sample Textual Analysis Essay Assignment

Instructions: Read the sample student essay carefully and answer the Response Questions. Before reading the essay, please review the brief comments I've provided below, as they will help you better understand how this essay can work as a model for you. When you are done answering the Response Questions, upload your activity to the Drop Box.

Comments on the Sample Essay:

This sample student essay illustrates one approach to the Textual Analysis essay:

- The essay titled "Gardens: Can They Save the World?" (which analyzes "Why Bother?") develops the analysis by making claims about the author's methods. That is, she does not move chronologically through Pollan'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 Pollan's essay.
- Another approach would be "chronological," i.e., moving through the professional essay you have chosen section by section, showing the development of the rhetorical appeals as you progress through the essay.

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 (chronological organization) can sometimes lead to mere summary of (or retelling of) the essay. Be sure that if you analyze the essays chronologically, you focus on discussing what method the author uses, why he would use this method, and how it would affect the audience or build the argument.

Response Questions: Answer the following questions for the sample student essay:

1. How effective do you think the introduction is? Why?
2. What is the student's thesis statement? Write it here.
3. Please 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?