

## **Composition I**

### **ENGL 1013**

#### **Essay Assignment 2: Explanatory Synthesis**

Your second major writing assignment is an explanatory synthesis of these articles:

[Source 1]

[Source 2]

[Source 3 optional]

This writing task requires that you present the information from these sources accurately and briefly, a skill that you practiced with the summary assignment. This time, however, you will have to manage more than one source, and you will have to explain how they relate to each other. The sources will clearly address the same topic, but they will present divergent opinions on it. Your task is to inform the readers of your essay about these positions without favoring a particular one (see pages 88-89 in *A Sequence for Academic Writing*). In fact, the idea is to remain neutral in order to truly understand and not misrepresent to the readers of your essay the message of the sources under consideration. This is an important step in the research process; neglecting it will lead to misinformation and will undermine your credibility and integrity as a researcher.

#### **Pre-Writing**

Think about your writing task. Identify subtopics that the sources have in common. List as many as you can. Choose a few subtopics that seem best suited for the purpose of this task.

#### **Introduction**

Use a strategy to capture your reader's attention and direct it toward the topic. The purpose of your introduction is, naturally, to introduce your topic and, in this case, the authors and their articles (your "sources"). Briefly summarize their divergent positions in relation to the topic, and then establish which subtopics you plan to discuss (this is your "essay map"). The final sentence of this section may be your thesis statement, which states the reason for alerting your readers to the discussion that follows (your writing purpose).

#### **The Body**

For each subtopic, paraphrase the authors' views, giving each source equal time, space, and consideration. Explain what reasoning and evidence each uses to support their view. Remember that this is an explanatory synthesis, so your reporting should be as impartial as possible. Be sure to provide a clear topic sentence for each subtopic, and use transition markers to help you shift between the authors' viewpoints and between subtopics (this will enhance your essay's coherence).

#### **The Conclusion**

Write a conclusion that explains the significance of the topic. Use this opportunity to leave your reader with a lasting impression of your treatment of the topic and the skill with which you

satisfied the task you set out for yourself in the introduction. Avoid simply repeating your thesis and essay map, as this approach hardly communicates sophistication.

### **Revision**

Carefully revise the draft of your essay by reconsidering the ideas in it and the way you organized them. Then consider whether you maintained the right tone (impartial and informative) and whether the essay needs further logical and phrasal transitions to improve its coherence. Finally, proofread your essay for errors in word usage, syntax (word-form and word-group order), and punctuation.

### **Citation Style**

Use MLA style to attribute information and expression of ideas to your sources. Every time you quote or paraphrase from the sources provide the corresponding parenthetical citation. The last page of your essay should be a “Works Cited” page, which as the name indicates, lists the sources to which you made reference in your essay.