**Reasoning and Organization**

**Activity One: Analysis of Frederick Douglass’s “What to a Slave is the 4th of July?’**

**Part One: Quick Write responses**

* Why do we celebrate the 4th of July? How do we celebrate? Why does this holiday have such meaning in our society?
* How does your perspective affect your view of the holiday?

**Part Two: Annotations of Sections. Read excerpts from the introduction, body, and conclusion of the speech. Annotate based on the questions before each excerpt.**

Frederick Douglass, a former slave, author and abolitionist delivered this speech in Rochester New

York in 1852.

Entire Speech is Here

<https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>

**Excerpt One Introduction**

* How is the historical context of the situation significant to Douglass’s speech?
* Which methods of development does the Douglass utilize to develop his ideas in the introduction?
* What is Douglass’s central argument in the passage?
* How does this method affect the audience? How does it make for a compelling argument?
* How does Douglass build a connection with his audience in the introduction?
* How does this lead the audience into the rest of the argument?

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens:

He who could address this audience without a quailing sensation, has stronger nerves than I have. I do not remember ever to have appeared as a speaker before any assembly more shrinkingly, nor with greater distrust of my ability, than I do this day. A feeling has crept over me, quite unfavorable to the exercise of my limited powers of speech. The task before me is one which requires much previous thought and study for its proper performance. I know that apologies of this sort are generally considered flat and unmeaning. I trust, however, that mine will not be so considered. Should I seem at ease, my appearance would much misrepresent me. The little experience I have had in addressing public meetings, in country schoolhouses, avails me nothing on the present occasion.

The papers and placards say, that I am to deliver a 4th [of] July oration. This certainly sounds large, and out of the common way, for it is true that I have often had the privilege to speak in this beautiful Hall, and to address many who now honor me with their presence. But neither their familiar faces, nor the perfect gage I think I have of Corinthian Hall, seems to free me from embarrassment.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, the distance between this platform and the slave plantation, from which I escaped, is considerable — and the difficulties to be overcome in getting from the latter to the former, are by no means slight. That I am here to-day is, to me, a matter of astonishment as well as of gratitude. You will not, therefore, be surprised, if in what I have to say I evince no elaborate preparation, nor grace my speech with any high sounding exordium. With little experience and with less learning, I have been able to throw my thoughts hastily and imperfectly together; and trusting to your patient and generous indulgence, I will proceed to lay them before you.

This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the 4th of July. It is the birthday of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? Were the nation older, the patriot’s heart might be sadder, and the reformer’s brow heavier. Its future might be shrouded in gloom, and the hope of its prophets go out in sorrow. There is consolation in the thought that America is young. Great streams are not easily turned from channels, worn deep in the course of ages. They may sometimes rise in quiet and stately majesty, and inundate the land, refreshing and fertilizing the earth with their mysterious properties. They may also rise in wrath and fury, and bear away, on their angry waves, the accumulated wealth of years of toil and hardship. They, however, gradually flow back to the same old channel, and flow on as serenely as ever. But, while the river may not be turned aside, it may dry up, and leave nothing behind but the withered branch, and the unsightly rock, to howl in the abyss-sweeping wind, the sad tale of departed glory. As with rivers so with nations.

Fellow-citizens, I shall not presume to dwell at length on the associations that cluster about this day. The simple story of it is that, 76 years ago, the people of this country were British subjects. The style and title of your “sovereign people” (in which you now glory) was not then born. You were under the British Crown. Your fathers esteemed the English Government as the home government; and England as the fatherland. This home government, you know, although a considerable distance from your home, did, in the exercise of its parental prerogatives, impose upon its colonial children, such restraints, burdens and limitations, as, in its mature judgment, it deemed wise, right and proper.

But, your fathers, who had not adopted the fashionable idea of this day, of the infallibility of government, and the absolute character of its acts, presumed to differ from the home government in respect to the wisdom and the justice of some of those burdens and restraints. They went so far in their excitement as to pronounce the measures of government unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive, and altogether such as ought not to be quietly submitted to. I scarcely need say, fellow-citizens, that my opinion of those measures fully accords with that of your fathers. Such a declaration of agreement on my part would not be worth much to anybody. It would, certainly, prove nothing, as to what part I might have taken, had I lived during the great controversy of 1776. To say now that America was right, and England wrong, is exceedingly easy. Everybody can say it; the dastard, not less than the noble brave, can flippantly discant on the tyranny of England towards the American Colonies. It is fashionable to do so; but there was a time when to pronounce against England, and in favor of the cause of the colonies, tried men’s souls. They who did so were accounted in their day, plotters of mischief, agitators and rebels, dangerous men. To side with the right, against the wrong, with the weak against the strong, and with the oppressed against the oppressor! here lies the merit, and the one which, of all others, seems unfashionable in our day. The cause of liberty may be stabbed by the men who glory in the deeds of your fathers. But, to proceed.

Feeling themselves harshly and unjustly treated by the home government, your fathers, like men of honesty, and men of spirit, earnestly sought redress. They petitioned and remonstrated; they did so in a decorous, respectful, and loyal manner. Their conduct was wholly unexceptionable. This, however, did not answer the purpose. They saw themselves treated with sovereign indifference, coldness and scorn. Yet they persevered. They were not the men to look back.

As the sheet anchor takes a firmer hold, when the ship is tossed by the storm, so did the cause of your fathers grow stronger, as it breasted the chilling blasts of kingly displeasure. The greatest and best of British statesmen admitted its justice, and the loftiest eloquence of the British Senate came to its support. But, with that blindness which seems to be the unvarying characteristic of tyrants, since Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea, the British Government persisted in the exactions complained of.

The madness of this course, we believe, is admitted now, even by England; but we fear the lesson is wholly lost on our present ruler.

Oppression makes a wise man mad. Your fathers were wise men, and if they did not go mad, they became restive under this treatment. They felt themselves the victims of grievous wrongs, wholly incurable in their colonial capacity. With brave men there is always a remedy for oppression. Just here, the idea of a total separation of the colonies from the crown was born! It was a startling idea, much more so, than we, at this distance of time, regard it. The timid and the prudent (as has been intimated) of that day, were, of course, shocked and alarmed by it.

**Excerpt 2 Body**

* How does beginning with a question help to organize this section?
* What evidence does Douglass utilize to develop his response to the question he poses?
* How compelling is his personal narrative?

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy — a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.

Take the American slave-trade, which, we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now. Ex-Senator Benton tells us that the price of men was never higher than now. He mentions the fact to show that slavery is in no danger. This trade is one of the peculiarities of American institutions. It is carried on in all the large towns and cities in one-half of this confederacy; and millions are pocketed every year, by dealers in this horrid traffic. In several states, this trade is a chief source of wealth. It is called (in contradistinction to the foreign slave-trade) “the internal slave trade.” It is, probably, called so, too, in order to divert from it the horror with which the foreign slave-trade is contemplated. That trade has long since been denounced by this government, as piracy. It has been denounced with burning words, from the high places of the nation, as an execrable traffic. To arrest it, to put an end to it, this nation keeps a squadron, at immense cost, on the coast of Africa. Everywhere, in this country, it is safe to speak of this foreign slave-trade, as a most inhuman traffic, opposed alike to the laws of God and of man. The duty to extirpate and destroy it, is admitted even by our DOCTORS OF DIVINITY. In order to put an end to it, some of these last have consented that their colored brethren (nominally free) should leave this country, and establish themselves on the western coast of Africa! It is, however, a notable fact that, while so much execration is poured out by Americans upon those engaged in the foreign slave-trade, the men engaged in the slave-trade between the states pass without condemnation, and their business is deemed honorable.

Behold the practical operation of this internal slave-trade, the American slave-trade, sustained by American politics and America religion. Here you will see men and women reared like swine for the market. You know what is a swine-drover? I will show you a man-drover. They inhabit all our Southern States. They perambulate the country, and crowd the highways of the nation, with droves of human stock. You will see one of these human flesh-jobbers, armed with pistol, whip and bowie-knife, driving a company of a hundred men, women, and children, from the Potomac to the slave market at New Orleans. These wretched people are to be sold singly, or in lots, to suit purchasers. They are food for the cotton-field, and the deadly sugar-mill. Mark the sad procession, as it moves wearily along, and the inhuman wretch who drives them. Hear his savage yells and his blood-chilling oaths, as he hurries on his affrighted captives! There, see the old man, with locks thinned and gray. Cast one glance, if you please, upon that young mother, whose shoulders are bare to the scorching sun, her briny tears falling on the brow of the babe in her arms. See, too, that girl of thirteen, weeping, yes! weeping, as she thinks of the mother from whom she has been torn! The drove moves tardily. Heat and sorrow have nearly consumed their strength; suddenly you hear a quick snap, like the discharge of a rifle; the fetters clank, and the chain rattles simultaneously; your ears are saluted with a scream, that seems to have torn its way to the center of your soul! The crack you heard, was the sound of the slave-whip; the scream you heard, was from the woman you saw with the babe. Her speed had faltered under the weight of her child and her chains! that gash on her shoulder tells her to move on. Follow the drove to New Orleans. Attend the auction; see men examined like horses; see the forms of women rudely and brutally exposed to the shocking gaze of American slave-buyers. See this drove sold and separated forever; and never forget the deep, sad sobs that arose from that scattered multitude. Tell me citizens, WHERE, under the sun, you can witness a spectacle more fiendish and shocking. Yet this is but a glance at the American slave-trade, as it exists, at this moment, in the ruling part of the United States.

I was born amid such sights and scenes. To me the American slave-trade is a terrible reality. When a child, my soul was often pierced with a sense of its horrors. I lived on Philpot Street, Fell’s Point, Baltimore, and have watched from the wharves, the slave ships in the Basin, anchored from the shore, with their cargoes of human flesh, waiting for favorable winds to waft them down the Chesapeake. There was, at that time, a grand slave mart kept at the head of Pratt Street, by Austin Woldfolk. His agents were sent into every town and county in Maryland, announcing their arrival, through the papers, and on flaming “hand-bills,” headed CASH FOR NEGROES. These men were generally well dressed men, and very captivating in their manners. Ever ready to drink, to treat, and to gamble. The fate of many a slave has depended upon the turn of a single card; and many a child has been snatched from the arms of its mother by bargains arranged in a state of brutal drunkenness.

**Excerpt 3: Conclusion**

* What rhetorical choices does Douglass make in the conclusion in order to convey his purpose to the audience?
* Why are these choices compelling?
* What is his view of the 4th of July in this passage?
* How is Douglass’s tone different in this section than in the introduction and body sections?
* Why did Douglass end not with his own words but with the poem from William Lloyd Garrison? Is this method of conclusion effective in making Douglass’s argument?

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation, which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery. “The arm of the Lord is not shortened,” and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from the Declaration of Independence, the great principles it contains, and the genius of American Institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up from the surrounding world, and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind. Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents. Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic, are distinctly heard on the other. The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, “Let there be Light,” has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen, in contrast with nature. Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God.” In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it:

God speed the year of jubileeThe wide world o’erWhen from their galling chains set free,Th’ oppress’d shall vilely bend the knee,

And wear the yoke of tyranny
Like brutes no more.
That year will come, and freedom’s reign,
To man his plundered fights again
Restore.

God speed the day when human blood
Shall cease to flow!
In every clime be understood,
The claims of human brotherhood,
And each return for evil, good,
Not blow for blow;
That day will come all feuds to end.
And change into a faithful friend
Each foe.

God speed the hour, the glorious hour,
When none on earth
Shall exercise a lordly power,
Nor in a tyrant’s presence cower;
But all to manhood’s stature tower,
By equal birth!
That hour will come, to each, to all,
And from his prison-house, the thrall
Go forth.

Until that year, day, hour, arrive,
With head, and heart, and hand I’ll strive,
To break the rod, and rend the gyve,
The spoiler of his prey deprive —
So witness Heaven!
And never from my chosen post,
Whate’er the peril or the cost,
Be driven.

Source: Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings, ed. Philip S. Foner (Chicago: Lawrence Hill, 1999), 188-206.

**Part Three: After Reading write a paragraph in response to the following questions**

The title of the speech is a question.

Write out what you think Douglass’s thesis is. Does this thesis answer the question? Has the evidence Douglass provided effectively defended this argument? How appropriate is this speech in thinking about the 4th of July this year?

**Activity Two: Martin Luther King Analysis**

Read the following passage which Martin Luther King Jr. wrote as the introduction to his book Why We Can’t Wait. Then in your group analyze the rhetorical situation, claims and evidence, and line of reasoning for the passage.

It is the beginning of the year of our Lord 1963.

I see a young Negro boy. He is sitting on a stoop in front of a vermin-infested apartment house in Harlem. The stench of garbage is in the halls. The drunks, the jobless, the junkies are shadow figures of his everyday world. The boy goes to school attended mostly by Negro students with a scattering of Puerto Ricans. His father is one of the jobless. His mother is a sleep-in domestic, working for a family on Long Island.

I see a young Negro girl. She is sitting on the stoop of a rickety wooden one-family house in Birmingham. Some visitors would call it a shack. It needs paint badly and the patched-up roof appears in danger of caving in. Half a dozen small children in various stages of undress are scampering about the house. The girl is forced to play the role of their mother. She can no longer attend the all-Negro school in her neighborhood because her mother died only recently after a car accident. Neighbors say if the ambulance had not come so late to take her to the all-Negro hospital the mother might still be alive. The girl’s father is a porter, for there are no promotions for the Negro in this store, where every counter serves him except the one that sells hot dogs and orange juice.

The boy and girl, separated by stretching miles, are wondering: Why does mosery constantly haunt the Negro? In some distant past, had their forebears done some tragic injury to the nation, and was the cause of punishment upon the black race? Had they shirked in their duty as patriots, betrayed their country, denied their national birthright? Had they refused to defend their land against all foreign foe?

Not all of history is recorded in the books supplies to school children in Harlem or Birmingham. Yet this by and girl know something of the part of history which has been censored by the white writers and purchasers of board-of-education books. They know that Negroes were with George Washington at Valley Forge. They know that the first American to shed blood in the revolution which freed his country from British oppression was a black seaman named Crispus Attucks. The boy’s Sunday-school teacher has told him that one of the team who designed the capital of their nation, Washington, S.C.,was a Negro, Benjamin Banneker. Once the girl had heard a speaker invited to her school during Negro History Week. This speaker told how, for two hundred years, without wages, black people brought to this land in slave ships and in chains, has drained swamps, built the homes, made cotton king and helped, on whip-lashed backs, to lift this nation from colonial obscurity to commanding influence in domestic commerce and world trade.

Wherever there was hard work, dirty work, dangerous work-- in the mines, on the docks, in the blistering foundries-- Negroes had done more than their share.

The plae history books in Harlem and Birmingham told how the nation had fought a war over slavery. Abraham Lincoln had signed a document that would come to be known as the Emancipation Proclamation. The war had been won but not a just peace. Equality had never arrived. Equality was a hundred years late. They boy and girl knew more than history. They knew something about current events, They knew that African nations had burst the bonds of colonialism. They knew that a great great grandson of Crispus Attucks might be ruled out of some restricted, all-white restaurant in some restricted, all-white section of a southern town, hist United States Marines uniform notwithstanding. They knew that Negroes living in the capital of their own nation were confined to ghettos and could not always get a job for which they were qualified. They knew that white surpriciacts had defied the Supreme Court and that southern governors had attempted to interpose themselves between the people and the highest law of the land. They knew that, for years, their own lawyers had won great victories in the courts which were not being translated into reality.

They were seeing on television, hearing form the radio, reading the newspapers that this was the one-hundredth birthday of their freedom.

But freedom had a dull ring, a mocking emptiness when, in their time-- in the short life span of this boy and girl-- buses had stopped rolling in Montgomery; sit-inners were jailed and beaten; freedom riders were brutalized and mobbed; dogs’ fangs were bared in Birmingham , and in Brooklyn, New York there were certain kinds of construction jobs for whites only.

It was the summer of 1963. Was emancipation a face? Was freedom a force?

The boy in Harlem stood up. The girl in Birmingham arose. Separated by stretching miles, both of them squared their shoulders and lifted their eyes toward heaven. Across the miles they joined hands, and took a firm, forward step. It was a step that rocked the richest, most powerful nation to its foundations.

This is the story of that boy and that girl. This is the story of *Why We Can’t Wait.*

Activity Two, Part One: Rhetorical Situation and Claims and Evidence

CLE3. A. Identify and explain claims and evidence that supports the claim

Adapted from Fletcher 2015 Teaching Argument

Time

Describe what’s special about this moment in time

(e.g. holiday, historical event, election, scientific discovery, opportunity)

Context/Occasion: Exigence-what has led to this speech occurring?

Speakers’ Claim/Position

What does the speaker say?

Social Expectations

Describe the behavior people consider appropriate for this occasion?

Place

Describe what makes this location unique

List any words or phrases that suggest the importance of time or place.

How would you describe the Kairos of this text? How do time, place and social expectations impact the writer’s argument? Do you think the writer or speaker has chosen the best opportunity to make his or her argument? What is the stasis? (point of disagreement or question: definition, policy, fact, cause and effect, or quality)

Kairos, Exigence, and Stasis in the *Why We Can’t Wait?*

Directions: Using the speech that you have explain the elements of kairos, exigence, and stasis for that speech. Be prepared to explain this to the class.

Activity Two, Part Two : Arrangement

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Classical Outline structure (arrangement) | Why we Can’t Wait?  |
| **Introduction** (ethos, gets audience’s interest and establishes goodwill-credibility or authority) |  |
| **Narration** (statement of facts, logos) |  |
| **Division** (list of points with which you and your opponent agree and where you disagree) |  |
| Refutation (challenge your opponent’s argument) |  |
| **Proof** (state your actual argument, logos) |  |
| **Conclusion** (restate your best points, explain why you have been successful, call to action -pathos) |  |

Select one of the articles and respond to the following questions:

* What type of organization has the author used? (Order of Importance to Climax, Order of Generalization and Example, Chronological Order, Spatial Order, Problem to Solution, Order of Familiarity, Order of Frequency, Order of Complexity, Order of Audience Awareness and Acceptance) How do they use this line of reasoning to support their claim?
* Does the writer’s reasoning proceed from an established claim, or does the reasoning advance toward a claim? Where is the claim?
* How does the writer’s reasoning through commentary logically connect chosen evidence to a claim?
* How does the writer’s sequencing of paragraphs reveal the argument’s line of reasoning?
* What is the article’s final argument (findings)? Does this argument flow logical from the claim and evidence? Why or why not?

**Activity Three: What is an American? Socratic Seminar Readings**

Read the following articles, all from section A and one from section B.

Fill out the attached chart. You print it and scan it or type it up and turn it in. This is due by the beginning of class and will be a preparation for a Socratic seminar on Thursday.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Article | How does the author of the article view being an American? | How does the article extend its line of reasoning? | Give at least two examples or pieces of evidence for this view | Do you agree with this view why or why not? |
| Hudgins Cato Institute |  |  |  |  |
| De Sales Atlantic Article |  |  |  |  |
| Paine Passage |  |  |  |  |
| Frederick DouglassWhat is 4th of July to a Slave? |  |  |  |  |
| Article from Part B (write Article Name) |  |  |  |  |

1. Read All the Following and fill out the chart by Wednesday beginning of period
2. [What is an American](https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/what-is-american) by Edward L. Hudgins Cato Institute 1998
3. Passage from *The Atlantic* 1939 by Raoul de Roussy de Sales (at the bottom of this document) handout pages 11-12
4. What to A Slave Is the 4th of July? by Frederick Douglass 1852 (read excerpt page 1-8) complete link here
5. <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/what-to-the-slave-is-the-fourth-of-july/>
6. Thomas Paine excerpt from AP exam (page 10)
7. Read **One** of the Following
8. From *Hillbilly Elegy* by JD Vance 2015 (attached)
9. From *New Jim Crow Laws* by Michelle Alexander 2011 (attached)
10. [Young Latinos Carving out their Own Identity](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/young-latinos-born-u-s-carving-their-own-identity-n908086) in NBC News
11. [Muslims are facing a Civil Rights Crisis in America](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/in-theory/wp/2015/11/11/muslims-are-facing-a-civil-rights-crisis-in-america/?utm_term=.f5798041f969) by Evelyn Alsultany in *Washington Post* 2015
12. [The Real Success to Asian Americans was Not Education](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/19/the-real-secret-to-asian-american-success-was-not-education/?utm_term=.d6c2ff406f31) by Jeff Guo in *Washington Post* 2016
13. Ngyuyen Time Magazine 2018 I Love America That Is Why I Must Tell the Truth about It (passed out in class or linked here)

<http://time.com/5455490/american-like-me/>

1. Barack Obama 2008 National Constitution Center

<http://consitutioncenter.org/amoreperfectunion>

AP Prompt 2011

The following passage is from Rights of Man, a book written by the pamphleteer Thomas Paine in 1791. Born in England, Paine was an intellectual, a revolutionary, and a supporter of American independence from England. Read the passage carefully. Then write an essay that takes a position on Paine’s claim that in America “there is nothing to engender riots and tumults.”

If there is a country in the world, where concord, according to common calculation, would be least expected, it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable; but by the simple operation of constructing government on the principles of society and the rights of man, every difficulty retires, and all the parts are brought into cordial unison. There, the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged. . .. Their taxes are few, because their government is just; and as there is nothing to render them wretched, there is nothing to engender riots and tumults.

# What Makes an American?

"To become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed."

[Raoul de Roussy de Sales](https://www.theatlantic.com/author/raoul-de-roussy-de-sales/)

[March 1939 Issue](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/toc/1939/03/) The Atlantic

**II**

To a European, no country is more interesting from this point of view than America, and in the seven years I have lived here none has interested me and puzzled me more.

To begin with, it took me some time to formulate to myself an answer to the very simple questions: "What makes an American? How does it *feel* to belong to this nation?"

These questions will naturally sound absurd to an American, and he might retort, "Well, how does it feel to be a Frenchman?" But that is just the point—most Frenchmen can tell you quite clearly what makes them conscious of being French, but I have found it very difficult to obtain from my American friends or from my reading a comprehensive definition of the American nationality.

First of all, it is obvious that the sense of nationality is not less developed in Americans than in any other people. It is quite as real and quite as visible in all its manifestations. But the fact that such expressions as "Americanism," the "American way," the "American outlook," and so forth, have had to be coined seems to indicate that Americans are the first to feel the need of qualifying themselves when they say, "I am an American." More than that, the American consciousness gives an impression of growth. It is not static, and one feels that it still contains tremendous possibilities of expression.

For the moment, however, there is a very important trait in the make-up of the American nationality which does not exist, I believe, in any other. And that is the fact that America is a permanent protest against the rest of the world, and particularly against Europe.

This attitude has both historical and psychological reasons. Most Americans believe today the following facts concerning their nation: (1) that this continent was peopled by men who rebelled against the tyrannies of Europe; (2) that these men dedicated themselves, from the very beginning, to the purposeful establishment of a kind of freedom that should endure forever; (3) that they succeeded, by a "revolution" in breaking away forever from the oppressive domination and the cupidity of European imperialisms; (4) that in establishing a democratic government they determined forever the course of political perfection, and that whoever followed another course was on the road to damnation; (5) that although European nations were becoming progressively harmless in relation to the increasing power and resources of the ever-growing America, they remained a potential danger to the integrity of this great nation on account of their deplorable habit of wandering away from the true path of civilization, which is democracy, the pursuit of material comfort and more happiness for everybody on this earth as soon as possible.

An Englishman may have doubts regarding the British Empire, a Frenchman may be discouraged concerning the future of France. There are Germans who are not sure that they represent a superior race. All of them, however, remain thoroughly English, French, or German in spite of everything. The type of American who does not accept America as it is and has misgivings about it—such as Henry James, Edith Wharton, T. S. Eliot, and some others—belongs to a past generation. Today one seldom meets an American skeptic, for the reason that nothing is more assuredly unamerican than to entertain any doubt concerning the fact that somehow or other this country will come out all right.

There are many who will find such a statement too sweeping, and say, for instance, that President Roosevelt is destroying the national ideal, that he is leading the country to ruin, decadence, anarchy, and so forth. But even those objectors are not skeptical about the future of their country. Even they feel that faith in America is what makes them Americans. All their irritation would be assuaged if Mr. Roosevelt were removed, all their confidence restored. This kind of skepticism is skin-deep. It does not affect the soul of Americanism.

This faith, like all faiths, does not engender a passive attitude towards the rest of the world. Americans are tolerant to all creeds and to all convictions, but few people express their distrust and indignation with more vigor whenever some of *their* beliefs are offended. Few people are more conscious that ideas may be more destructive than guns. And rightly so, because if any unorthodox creed really implanted itself in America—if the day came when an American citizen could really feel that his country was not following the right course and that a change was due—the political disunion thus produced would have unforetold consequences. The one serious crisis of this kind that America has known, the Civil War, showed the frightful results of a real political conflict. It nearly made two nations out of one. But this experiment in dissension seems to have served as a lasting lesson. It is difficult to believe that it would be repeated. Unity on the fundamental principles of politics is indispensable to the life of this country. The presence of even a small minority who would question the validity of Americanism would attack at the very core the concept of American nationality itself…

In fact, to become an American is a process which resembles a conversion. It is not so much a new country that one adopts as a new creed. And in all Americans can be discerned some of the traits of those who have, at one time or another, abandoned an ancient faith for a new one.

Opener:

* What is America?
* Is there an American identity?
* In American society do you think environment and upbringing (nurture) or nature (genetics and natural ability) are more important to a person’s role in society?

Core:

* What vision of America do the articles/excerpts represent?
* What are the strengths and weaknesses of the presentations?
* Which text presents the most effective line of reasoning to support its position?
* Which presentation did you find most compelling? Why?

Closer:

* To what extent are the visions of Paine or Douglass more true today?

Scoring Rubric for Group *What is an American? Members Names*

 *4 3 2 1*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Makes at least three contributions during the round. Demonstrates advanced understanding and depth of knowledge *core texts on race and identity* Examples (evidence)used from the texts are pertinent and insightfulShows thorough preparation for the seminar. Arguments are reasonable and backed up with evidence from the texts. Ideas are original and insightful.Adds new ideas that buildconnections to the texts orthe ideas of others. Or elaborates on other’s ideas | Makes at least 2 contributionsDemonstrates effective understanding of core texts on race and identityEvidence used from thetexts are relevant to the discussion. Shows effectivepreparation for theseminar.Backs up arguments with clear examples. Expresses reasonsfor agreeing or disagreeingwith the ideas of the texts orof others. Is an active listenerand participant. | Demonstrates basicunderstanding of thetexts Evidence is used but may need more elaborationShows adequatepreparation for theseminar.Some arguments areunderdeveloped and notbacked up by evidence.Has difficulty movingbeyond opinions to makenew arguments within thediscussion.Comments may lack deepthought or contain ideas thatmay have already been said.Makes at least two contributions to the discussion—shows having read and thought about the texts. | Shows poorpreparation for seminar. Arguments areunderdeveloped and generallybased only on opinions with little reference to texts or the novel.Comments lack deepthought and often onlyrepeat what other studentshave already said.Makes at least two comments—does not reference texts!  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Round | 4-20 points | 3-18 points | 2-16 points | 1-12 points |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |

**Activity Four: Editorial**

**Assignment**

Write an editorial/opinion piece on a topic of your choice from general fields such as the following: arts and entertainment, culture, news/politics, science, sports, technology, travel, food, psychology, history, economics, fashion, etc. The editorial should be a maximum of three pages (750 words, 3 pages).

Find two editorials by an author whose style/voice you like (the articles do not have to be on the same topic you are writing about). Write an analysis of how you incorporated the style of the author into your own work—structure, voice, syntax, diction, argumentative strategies etc. (250 words maximum).

Provide a link to the articles in your paper.

The editorial should focus on argumentative strategies. Within the editorial you should make four links to articles which support your position, offer arguments which you refute, or provide interesting information which elaborates on your topic.

**Requirements**

1. **The Editorial Elements (60 points)**

You are attempting to persuade your audience of a position that you take on a certain issue—the editorial should have both facts and opinions and it should be clear which are which. You should have the following elements within your editorial

1. A hook which captures the audience’s attention
2. A clear thesis which states your position
3. An objective explanation of the issue (what are the facts)
4. An explanation of the opposition’s point of view
5. Your counterargument and explanation of why your argument is better
6. Ending with a dynamite conclusion that explodes your reader’s mind into tiny granules of adoration for your editorial’s splendor, sage insight into the world that we inhabit

**Your editorial should incorporate elements of argumentation**

**Logos: cause and effect, definition, syllogism, analogy, statistics**

**Pathos: emotion, good and bad**

**Ethos: credibility or validity of speaker**

**Avoid logical fallacies!**

1. **Links inserted into sentences in your document (10 points)**

Link four sources to your document, sources may be article you refute, articles which support your argument, information which elaborates on your topic, information which provides context for your topic, fun facts that your readers might enjoy about your topic, etc. Hyperlinks should be connected to your sentences through words.

1. **Write up of two mentor texts by the same editorialist (20 points)**

Explain how you stylistically used the work of an editorialist to create your work. Focus on style. The editorial does not have to be on the same or related topic but I would suggest using an editorialist who writes in the same genre because they may help you with style.

1. **Written style and proofreading (10 points)**

Please edit for complete sentences, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and appropriate agreement of tense and subjects and verbs.

**Sources for tips and Models**

**“For the Sake of Argument” *New York Times* by Michal Gonchar**

[**https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/for-the-sake-of-argument-writing-persuasively-to-craft-short-evidence-based-editorials/?\_r=1**](https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/02/07/for-the-sake-of-argument-writing-persuasively-to-craft-short-evidence-based-editorials/?_r=1)

**“How to Write an Editorial”**

[**http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/how-to-write-an-editorial.html**](http://www.creative-writing-ideas-and-activities.com/how-to-write-an-editorial.html)

**“Writing an Editorial” by Alan Weintraub**

[**https://www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/EdWrite.htm**](https://www.geneseo.edu/~bennett/EdWrite.htm)

**Video on Writing an Editorial from New York Times**

[**https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002691088/how-to-write-an-editorial.html**](https://www.nytimes.com/video/opinion/100000002691088/how-to-write-an-editorial.html)

 **Notable Characteristics of an Editorial**

[**http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Notable-Editorial**](http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Notable-Editorial)

**Journals, Magazines and Newspapers—Just suggestions you do not have to use any of these**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Arts and Entertainment****Rotten Tomatoes****The Vulture****Screen Rant****Spin** **Rolling Stone****Pitchfork****Metacritic****Aesthetica****The Artist****Classical Music** | **Culture****New Yorker****Vanity Fair****The Onion****Jezebel****Essence****Lifestyle****The Atlantic** | **Food****Food****Garden and Gun****Gastronomica****Southern Living****Bon Appetite** |
| **News and Politics****BBC World****CNN****Fox****Time****Newsweek****MSNBC****Atlanta Journal and Constitution****Washington Post****New York Times****National Review****Los Angeles Times****Huffington Post****The Onion (satire)** | **Science****Scientific American****Discover****Popular Science****Wired** | **Fashion****Vogue****Town and Country****Harpers Bazaar****Cosmopolitan** |
| **Psychology, Economics, and History****American Historian****Smithsonian****Psychology Today****The Economist** | **Sports****ESPN Magazine****Sports Illustrated****Yardbarker****Bleacher Report** |  |

Planning Sheet

Name

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Article Name and Author | Topic | Did you find this interesting enough to write your own position on? |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

List 5 things that you are interested, have an opinion about, or might make a good topic to discuss. It has to be something about which you can take a position.

**Editorial Analysis Sheet**

**Name:**

**Article Name:**

**Publication:**

**Author’s Name**

1. **What is the hook?**
2. **What is the thesis?**
3. **What is the issue? What are some facts about the issue upon which everyone agrees?**
4. **Who is the audience?**
5. **Who are the folks who opposed the author’s viewpoint? What are their positions?**
6. **What is the counterargument? What is it based upon logic, emotion, your credibility or authority? Why is it effective?**
7. **How are links and visuals incorporated.**
8. **How does it end?**
9. **What are some interesting stylistic elements?**
10. **What makes the conclusion powerful?**

**Editorial Planning Sheet**

1. **What is your hook?**
2. **What is your thesis?**
3. **What is the issue? What are some facts about the issue upon which everyone agrees?**
4. **Who is the audience?**
5. **Who are the folks who opposed your viewpoint? What are their positions?**
6. **What is your counterargument? What is it based upon logic, emotion, your credibility or authority? Why is it effective? Ending with a dynamite conclusion**
7. **What links will you use and how will they add to your editorial.**
8. **How are you going to explode your audience’s sensory systems with your conclusion?**

Rubric for Editorial Name: Topic

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Missing/weak | Adequate | Effective | Superior |
| Hook | 0-6 | Somewhat clichéd/trite (7) | **Original and interesting** (8-9) | Original, interesting, and **memorable (**10) |
| Thesis | 0-6 | **Clea**r/related to topic (7) | **Well worded**/related to topic (8-9) | Well worded/ related to topic/**insightful and original** (10) |
| Issue/facts | 0-6 | States issue and facts **clearly****(7)** | States issue and facts **clearly and thoroughly (8-9)** | States issues and facts clearly, thoroughly, and **insightfully (10)** |
| Opposition Points | 0-6 | Presents opposition position **generally (7)** | Presents **key arguments** of opposition’s position (8-9) | Presents **thorough** explanation of **essence** of opposition’s position (10) |
| Counter arguments and Evidence | 0-6 | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are **appropriate (7)** | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are appropriate **and sufficient****(8-9)** | Uses specific appeals to logic, ethos, and/or pathos connected to topic which are **appropriate and convincing** |