

Assignment Details

Please pay close attention to detail as I will return work that fails to address **every** aspect of the assignment--including formatting requirements--as "Incomplete" and require revision before I can issue credit. Thank you.

Please know that with the exception of Rhetorical Précis assignments, a "Complete" assignment is most often one that provides as much development as possible within a single page.
In fact, I urge you to aim for the bottom of the page.

Hollywood Inference (student samples available)

Inference: a claim about the unknown based upon the known.

Based upon the films listed on the index card you drew, what can you infer about the classmate who claims them as her/his favorites of all time? Select one or two of the bullets below (no more than two, please), and answer the question(s)--but don't stop there: **explain** your conclusions by referring frequently and specifically to the films. What about the film supports your claim, and how can you connect that claim to the assumptions that support it?

- ♦ If this person had to pick a fourth additional favorite movie, what would movie s/he list? Is this a film your colleague would proudly recommend to others, or is this a secret, guilty-pleasure movie?
- ♦ Why is this person in college? What major has this person declared, and on which career has this person set his/her sights? In which job might this person find her/himself in twenty years (please not that this question is not the same as the preceding question)?
- ♦ What cliché(s) might this person frequently invoke (for ideas, visit westegg.com or ClicheSite.com)? What bumper stickers might his person affix to his/her primary mode of transportation?
- ♦ Describe the contents of this person's refrigerator / freezer / larder / pantry **or** of this person's attic / garage / spare bedroom / basement.
- ♦ Describe this person's relationship with / feelings about family--past, present, and/or future. What are this person's beliefs about childrearing?

Please be aware that the classmate about whom you write will read your extended inference.

Rhetorical Précis (student samples available)

- Please note that each of the three RPs carries a different due date. I am not asking you to complete three RPs in one sitting; instead, I am asking you to complete one RP in three different sittings.
- For your first two RPs, please select any essay from our text that the class has not yet read. For the third RP, please select one of your **own** essays.

A rhetorical précis invites active readers to analyze an essay's content (the *what*) and delivery (the *how*). It consists of four sentences **only**—sentences performing different roles, adhering to different requirements—that blend summary and analysis. Please be sure to quote and cite specific textual references and to include a terminal bibliographic reference (see sample below). (If you would like to see a sample response to this assignment, please visit me during my office hours.)

- The **FIRST SENTENCE** identifies the essay's **author** and **title**, provides the article's **date** in parenthesis, uses some form of the verb *says* (*claims*, *asserts*, *suggests*, *argues*—see [Avoiding Oatmeal Verbs](#) for additional verbs) followed by *that*, and the essay's **thesis** (paraphrased or quoted).

EXAMPLE: In "The Ugly Truth about Beauty" (1998), Dave Barry argues that "... women generally do not think of their looks in the same way that men do" (110).

- The **SECOND SENTENCE** describes the author's **support** for the thesis, the way in which the author **develops** the essay.
EXAMPLE: Barry illuminates this discrepancy by juxtaposing men's perceptions of their looks ("average-looking") with women's ("not good enough"), by contrasting female role models (Barbie, Cindy Crawford) with male role models (He-Man, Buzz-Off), and by comparing men's interests (the Super Bowl, lawn care) with women's (manicures) (110).
- The **THIRD SENTENCE** analyzes the author's **purpose** using an *in order to* statement:
EXAMPLE: He exaggerates and stereotypes these differences in order to prevent women from so eagerly accepting society's expectations; in fact, Barry claims that men who want women to "look like Cindy Crawford" are "idiots" (111).
- The **FOURTH SENTENCE** describes the essay's target **audience** and characterizes the essay's **tone** (the author's relationship with that audience) and provides support for your assertions concerning audience and tone:
EXAMPLE: Barry seems to address men in this essay because most of his *yous* refer to men (as in "If you're a man" on page 110); however, by using humor to poke fun at men's perceptions of themselves, Barry seems to want to address women and stop them from obsessively "trying to look like Cindy Crawford" (111).
- Please conclude your RP with the appropriate **bibliographic citation**:
 Barry, Dave. "The Ugly Truth about Beauty." *Mirror on America: Short Essays and Images from Popular Culture*. 2nd ed. Eds. Joan T. Mims and Elizabeth M. Nollen. NY: Bedford, 2003. 109-12.

Selling Your Stance (student samples available)

This assignment asks you to transform one of your essays into a one-page print advertisement. You may select a claim from an essay you have already drafted or use this assignment to help you visualize a future essay. Either way, once you've articulated your claim for yourself--once you know what you're selling--please consider **audience**. Who will benefit most from the message you seek to convey? Then think about this:

- To which publication might your audience subscribe?
- How can your knowledge of that publication help you craft your ad?
- How will you capture audience attention? What icons, colors, fonts, phrasings, and layout might appeal most?
- What mood should you create? How will you achieve that mood?
- What counterarguments might your audience launch, and how might you assuage those concerns?
- What prejudices do you anticipate? How might you capitalize on those preconceptions (or warrants) to sell your stance? While your essays must rely primarily on logic, your ad may incorporate emotional and/or ethical appeals.

Have fun with this assignment, please. Play. Get wild with glue and glitter and, well, whatever else will fit on the page:

- Drawings (pencils, crayons, markers, color pencils, etc.), Collages (using images from newspapers, magazines, etc.), Clip Art and Computer Graphics, Surprise me!

Please note that you will be sharing your advertisement with a small group of your peers--maybe even the entire class. Be prepared to explicate your handiwork: to explain the choices you made in constructing your masterpiece.

Endorsement Group Request

- In a [letter](#) to me, please identify your **first and second** choices for your Endorsement Group assignment from the following list of four:
 - ♦ **COMPREHENSIVE ISSUES:** Thesis, Focus, Audience Awareness
 - ♦ **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES:** Fallacies, Support, Source Use (Not Citation Conventions)
 - ♦ **ORGANIZATION ISSUES:** Cohesion, Paragraph Focus, Sequence
 - ♦ **LOCAL ISSUES:** Style, Grammar, Punctuation, Citation
- For **both** of your selections, please share with me what you know about the topics you request, and offer support of your expertise. In other words, what **SPECIFIC PROOF** can you provide that you can assist your colleagues with your selected topics? Don't simply insist that you're good at organization, for instance; instead, provide proof for that claim. Tell me about the strategies you use to color code your day planner, about how you test for paragraph focus, about how to gloss an essay, etc.
- Please also identify the **one** group to which you should **NOT** be assigned, and share your reasons for this request.
- Note: you are selecting groups based upon your writing skills, not upon your own desire for improvement in these areas.
- As you can imagine, I **simply must receive this assignment on time** if I am to make effective EG assignments. Please do not use your freebie late assignment on this one, and if you do, please get me an electronic or paper copy within 48 hours. Thank you.

Unpacking Clichés (student samples available)

My favorite definition of cliché can be found on [westegg.com](#), S. Morgan Friedman's website: "Cliché is a Grand truth that doesn't help anyone" ([anonymous web visitor](#)). The assertion captures the essence of cliché so much more eloquently than [Mirriam-Webster](#) does: "a trite phrase or expression," "something . . . overly familiar or commonplace." If they're so awful, why do they persist? Because they serve as abbreviations for common experiences and accepted wisdom. Your job in this assignment is to unpack that abbreviation, fleshing out the cliché to expose the warrant(s).

Please select a cliché, probably one that forms a complete sentence. (For ideas, visit [westegg.com](#) or [ClicheSite.com](#).) Then unpack it: articulate the warrants, identify the implicit value judgments, and consider the situations in which the cliché is accurate and inaccurate. Why, for instance, is penny saved a penny earned? What fiscal values does the saying profess? When is it true? untrue? **I need a full page for this assignment**, so if you find yourself falling short with one cliché, select additional examples.

Color Definition (student samples available)

Using **ALL** the methods of definition our text delineates in the chapter by the same name, please define any color of your choice. You know me well enough by now to realize that if I were looking for a specific structure or shape for this assignment, I would detail that structure. I am not, however, so please feel free to experiment and play.

More Fun with Fallacies Redux (student samples available)

If you scored an "Incomplete" on your [More Fun with Fallacies](#) assignment--or if you scored a "Complete" and want a "Strong"--please explain why the correct answer is more correct than the one you gave for the designations on which we disagree. Once I have returned the More Fun with Fallacies assignment, you may visit *The Cache* to download the correct answers. Take more than a page if you need it; I suspend the no-staples rule for this assignment.

Grading Letter

Using the [grading criteria](#) we established at the beginning of the semester, please write a [letter](#) helping me determine your course grade. In many ways, this is my favorite assignment because it fulfills two important purposes.

First, it exposes me to your behind-the-scenes work in English 101. By the time I read your letter, I will know how you have performed in your assignments; I will know what your papers look like. I might have heard from you frequently during class discussions, and I might have observed your work in Endorsement Groups. Now I need to know the invisible stuff: what you learned, how you grew, what you attempted. Here's your chance to tell me about the risks you took in your writing and responding this semester--even if the results were less than successful. Here's your chance to share with me the ways your thinking, reading, and writing have changed. Here's your chance to show me the stuff teachers don't always get to see.

Second, it provides you with an unusual writing opportunity. For this letter, you have a concrete purpose and a specific, familiar audience. We have worked together all semester, and in that time you have learned about my goals for this course and my wishes for you. You have heard how much I value [variety; risk taking; writing self-awareness; ample and specific development; audience awareness; clear, logical thinking; and support of other writers](#). I urge you to use this knowledge to craft your letter. Please note, however, that this letter is not an exercise in flattery or groveling; in fact, brown-nosing will more likely insult rather than impress me.

In short, please tell me--in a fully developed, specific, and rhetorically sound letter--what I need to know in order to assign your grade appropriately. You will be best served if you treat this assignment as you would an important paper and not as an afterthought: [provide copious and detailed support](#), employ vocabulary and skills acquired this semester, establish connections between course content and the world outside our classroom, and organize the letter's content to your best rhetorical advantage. Address the writing discoveries you made and the new tactics you employed, a task with which your Endorsement Group Routing Sheets can help. Discuss the ways in which your class performance helped you meet goals you set for yourself at the beginning of the semester. Comment on your Endorsement Group experiences, and remind me of the ways in which your participation contributed to the course's quality.

I cannot imagine accomplishing even half of the above goals in under one full page; my own letter would probably require three pages. As long as you avoid flowery, fatty prose, you may take as much room as you need to establish and prove your claims. Remember, please, that your letter helps me determine your participation grade and provides me with the opportunity to boost your course grade.

It's that important.

I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Lucile Appert of Vanderbilt University for inspiring Unpacking Clichés with her suggested assignment on the [Bedford/St. Martin's Instructor Resources page](#) for Annette T. Rottenberg's *The Elements of Argument*.

I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Shannon Mondor for teaching me about the rhetorical précis, an assignment she gleaned from the following source:
Woodworth, Margaret K. "The Rhetorical Précis." *Rhetoric Review* 9 (1988): 156-65.

I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Adrianna Bayer for her significant contributions to the Selling Your Stance and Paper Prospectus assignments (Fall 2006).