
 HIST 119D: The Myth of the Superhero, Then and Now

PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS**DISCUSSION****GROUP ESSAY**

WEEK 5, 6, & 7

DUE DATES:		
PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS	Sunday, May 6 @ Midnight via Turnitin.com	3pt
DISCUSSION	Monday, May 14 @ Midnight via Saylo Classroom	3pt
GROUP ESSAY	Sunday, May 20 @ Midnight via Turnitin.com	15%

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVES:

- Students will learn to craft an informed and persuasive written argument using primary source evidence.
- Students will learn to evaluate a historical argument and defend their assessment.
- Students will develop effective collaboration skills by negotiating a solution and learning to reach consensus.

PARAGRAPH ANALYSIS**DUE:** Sunday, May 6 @ Midnight via Turnitin.com

Historical analysis involves using primary source evidence to craft a valid and persuasive written argument. To convince your audience (the reader) that your conclusion is valid, you must (1) contextualize your evidence, (2) present your evidence, (3) provide an interpretation of your evidence, and (4) analyze your evidence.

What is analysis? What is critical thinking?

Analysis involves critical thinking (i.e. choice thinking). You must choose how to use your interpretation of the evidence to answer the historical question (prompt). Analysis is that process.

In formal academic writing, evidence is presented in the body of the essay. Each time you present evidence, you must contextualize it, interpret it, and analyze it. As a result, each body paragraph should represent as a mini-historical analysis.

Sample Paragraph Structure

CLAIM/TOPIC SENTENCE	Make a clear claim that explains what you will be arguing in the paragraph. When writing on a topic such as heroism, your topic sentence should tell the reader what aspect of heroism you will be analyzing and why it is significant. In other words, the topic sentence is a summary of your analysis. It is best to write it after you do the analysis.
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<p>CONTEXT/BACKGROUND</p>	<p>Introduce the evidence that you are about to present by giving some context/background to the quote. What does the reader need to know about the larger text to understand the evidence?</p> <p><i>“Describing the battle, the author states...”</i> <i>“Immediately after she entered the monastery, the author described her reaction. He writes,...”</i></p>
<p>EVIDENCE/QUOTE</p>	<p>Choose a short quote that relates to the topic of your paragraph/paper. Note: The longer the quote, the more explaining you will have to do in the next section.</p>
<p>INTERPRETATION/ EXPLANATION OF EVIDENCE</p>	<p>Provide your interpretation (explanation) of the quote. What does the quote mean? What do you want the reader to notice in the evidence that you have chosen? Clarify any words/terms that the reader may not know. Draw connections between parts of the quote. Do you understand the quote as saying something literal or figurative?</p> <p><i>“In this example, the author is saying...”</i> <i>“In other words,...”</i></p>
<p>ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE</p>	<p>Explain how/why your interpretation of the evidence answers the historical question (prompt).</p> <p><i>Your analysis should be specific to the quote and the document: What is so important about this quote? Help your reader understand why/ how your evidence answers the prompt.</i></p>

How to write a persuasive paragraph?

The historical method is like the scientific method. You should never start with a conclusion and then attempt to find evidence to support it. Rather, you should start with the evidence and draw your conclusion from it via analysis (i.e. experimentation). Do not be a “bad” historian that cherry picks evidence to support a conclusion; do not be a bad researcher that adjusts the experiment to meet the desired outcome.

Try using the historical method to craft a paragraph.

1. Choose a quote
 - 2-3. Contextualize and interpret the quote
 4. Analyze the quote
 5. Summarize your analysis in one sentence, i.e. make a claim
- Now reorder the steps into a cohesive paragraph.

SAMPLE PARAGRAPH USING HISTORICAL METHOD

<p>PROMPT (HISTORICAL QUESTION): According to <i>The Epic of Gilgamesh</i>, what makes a person heroic? What does this reveal about Sumerian society?</p>	
<p>HISTORICAL ANALYSIS STEPS:</p>	
<p><i>Step #1: Choose a quote from the text that you think can be used to make an argument about Sumerian belief in heroes and heroic qualities. Write down the quote.</i></p>	<p>Gilgamesh heard the words of the senior advisers, he looked with a [laugh at] Enkidu ... : [‘Now, my friend, how frightened I am!] [In fear of him shall I change my mind ?’]</p>

<p><i>Step #2: Contextualize the quote: What does the reader need to know to understand this quote? What happened immediately before this quote? Who is speaking?</i></p>	<p>Gilgamesh and Enkidu are about to go battle Humababa, the guardian of the cedar forest who has been terrorizing the people of Sumer. The senior advisors of Uruk warn Gilgamesh that Humbaba is very strong and try to dissuade him from going on his quest. Even Enkidu claims that Humababa is among the most terrifying creatures on earth.</p>
<p><i>Step #3: In your own words, explain what is happening in this quote? This is your interpretation.</i></p>	<p>Gilgamesh listens to the advice of the senior advisors about Humbaba's strength but then explains to them and to Enkidu that he is not going to let that fear stop him from fighting. He even admits that he is afraid but laughs at Enkidu as a sign of not giving into his fears.</p>
<p><i>Step #4: Analyze the quote: What does this quote tell us about Sumerian belief in heroes? What qualities did Sumerians regard as heroic? What does this reveal about Sumerian society?</i></p>	<p>This quote tells us that the Sumerians believed that to be heroic one needed to continuously push forward despite fear. Bravery was a major quality of a hero. Gilgamesh showed his bravery by asking that question; "In fear of him shall I change my mind?" By asking Enkidu that question he is telling him that if he were to not go because he was scared, he would not be brave enough to be the hero that he was.</p>
<p><i>Step #5: In one sentence, summarize your analysis (step 4).</i></p>	<p>A hero is someone who does not give in to his fears even when he is faced with the most challenging obstacles.</p>
<p>FINAL PARAGRAPH: <i>Reorder the steps to create a coherent paragraph. Add transitions if necessary.</i> <i>Step 5 → Step 2 → Step 1 → Step 3 → Step 4</i></p>	
<p>According to the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i>, a hero is someone who does not give in to his fears even when he is faced with the most challenging obstacles. As Gilgamesh and Enkidu are about to go battle Humababa, the guardian of the cedar forest who has been terrorizing the people of Sumer, the senior advisors of Uruk warn Gilgamesh that Humbaba is very strong and try to dissuade him from going on his quest. Even Enkidu claims that Humbaba is among the most terrifying creatures on earth. Gilgamesh does not give into fear. The texts states, "Gilgamesh heard the words of the senior advisers, he looked with a [laugh at] Enkidu ... 'Now, my friend, how frightened I am! In fear of him shall I change my mind ?'." Gilgamesh listens to the advice of the senior advisors about Humbaba's strength but then explains to them and to Enkidu that he is not going to let that fear stop him from fighting. He even admits that he is afraid but laughs at Enkidu as a sign of not giving into his fears. This quote tells us that the Sumerians believed that to be heroic one needed to continuously push forward despite fear. Bravery was a major quality of a hero. Gilgamesh showed by telling Enkidu telling if he were not go because he was scared, he would not be brave enough to be the hero that he was. In Sumerian society, a hero was a man who could overcome his fear and follow his quest.</p>	

Instructions

Write a paragraph answering the following prompt:

According to the *Song of Roland*, what makes a knight heroic? What does this reveal about medieval society?

Your paragraph should be **250-300 words**, 12pt font, double-spaced. Submit to Turnitin.com.

RUBRIC	
3pt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assignment meets all the requirements, and demonstrates care and effort. • The topic sentence makes a clear claim introducing the argument of the paragraph not just the topic. • The evidence is contextualized, i.e. the author provides just enough background (no more, no less) for the reader to understand the evidence. • The evidence is succinct and carefully chosen. • The interpretation covers all the evidence and provides a logical link between the evidence and analysis. • The analysis is specific to the evidence; it uses the evidence to critically answer the prompt.
2pt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assignment meets the minimum requirements but demonstrates some lack of attention to detail. • The topic sentence makes a clear claim but introduces only the topic not the argument. • The context is not sufficient to introduce the evidence or provides information that is unnecessary to understanding the evidence. • The interpretation does not consider (i.e., ignores) parts of the evidence. • The analysis is too general; it is not specific to the evidence but rather makes broad claims based on course lectures.
1pt	The assignment does not meet the minimum requirements. It is rushed and demonstrates little effort or care.
0pt	No submission

DISCUSSION

DUE: Monday, May 14 @ Midnight via Saylo Classroom

On Wednesday May 9, your TA will provide you with a list of paragraphs (anonymous; names will be removed) chosen from your submissions from the previous assignment.

You will be divided into groups of 7-9 in Saylo Classroom. Using the discussion tool in Saylo, with your group, you will determine which **3 paragraphs** from the list provided by your TA could best be used for the body of an essay on the following prompt:

According to the *Song of Roland*, what makes a knight heroic? What does this reveal about medieval society?

Your contribution to the discussion must include at least **two posts**:

1. A critical evaluation of at least one paragraph, its strengths, and any potential weakness, as well as, a discussion of how that paragraph relates to two others that together could form the body of an essay.
2. A contribution to the final consensus on which paragraphs to use in the body of an essay on heroic ideals in *Song of Roland*. (This could be a simple statement of agreement).

RUBRIC	
3pt	The evaluation of the paragraph(s) demonstrates thought and attention to the structure and content. The student comments on the strength(s)/weakness(es) of the claim, context, evidence, interpretation, and/or analysis. The student participates in the final consensus.
2pt	The evaluation of the paragraphs demonstrates some thought but lacks substance, i.e. the student does not support the evaluation with critical reference to parts of the paragraph: the claim, context, evidence, interpretation, and/or analysis. The student participates in the final consensus.
1pt	The assignment does not meet the minimum requirements. It is rushed and demonstrates little effort or care.
0pt	No submission

GROUP ESSAY

DUE: Sunday, May 20 @ Midnight via Turnitin.com

Once your Saylo group finalizes which three paragraphs could best be used to make up the body of an essay on heroic ideals in the *Song of Roland*, your TA will divide you into groups of 2-3. With your partner(s) you will assemble an essay on the *Song of Roland*, using the three paragraphs that you identified in the Saylo discussion as the body of your essay, and add an introduction and conclusion.

As a reminder, your prompt is...

According to the *Song of Roland*, what makes a knight heroic? What does this reveal about medieval society?

Your essay should include the following paragraphs:

1. Introduction
- 2-4. Body paragraphs identified during your Saylo discussion
5. Conclusion

What is an introduction?

Your introduction sets the tone of your paper. The purpose of an introduction is to

- Identify the problem to be discussed, i.e. introduce the historical question or prompt.
- Introduce the “object of study.” History is the study textual sources; the objects of historical study are primary sources. An introduction must introduce the object(s) of study, i.e. the source(s) that you will be using to draw your conclusions about the time period.
- Provide essential background information: Who? When? Where? What?
- Define key terms that the reader must know to understand the essay (e.g. chivalry).
- Present the **thesis**.

Thesis

A well-written paper on any topic has a central thesis, which is the focus of attention throughout the paper. A well-written thesis:

1. Makes a claim about how the primary source answers the historical question (prompt) thus giving the reader a sense of how the author will use evidence to answer the historical question (prompt).
2. Establishes the significance of that claim in terms of the historical context.

A history thesis statement includes 3 components:

	Components	Purpose
WHAT	A <u>claim</u> about a certain event or a historical topic.	To identify a central topic and establish the focus of your argument... <i>so that the reader knows what you will argue.</i>
HOW	A synopsis of what events, ideas, or sources you will use to prove your claim.	To show that you can prove your claim... <i>so that the reader understands your thought process and how you will argue your point.</i>
WHY	A <u>claim</u> concerning the significance of your argument in terms of the historical context.	To show that your analysis of the primary sources provides insight into the history... <i>so that the reader understands the value of your argument.</i>

Sample Thesis Statements

1) Frank Capra was a great American film director who made a series of madcap comedies during the height of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Commentary: This is a summary statement not a thesis.

2) Frank Capra (May 18, 1897 – September 3, 1991) was an Italian-born American film director, producer and writer who worked his way from Los Angeles' Italian ghetto to become the creative force behind some of the major award-winning films of the 1930s and 1940s. His success made him one America's most influential directors during the 1930s.

Commentary: This is a summary statement disguised as thesis because of its length.

3) The success of Frank Capra as a director in the 1930s is directly related to the economic depression of the time. Families suffering hardship were attracted to lighthearted forms of entertainment such as Capra's comedies, because they relished the opportunity to forget their troubles for a while. His movies became an escape for many from the difficulties of their daily lives.

Commentary: This is an academic thesis because it makes a clear WHAT claim that the author will substantiate with primary source evidence and a WHY claim about the significance of the evidence. The thesis promises to:

(1) Show that Capra's films were most popular during the Great Depression. This could be done by comparing ticket sales and critic reviews from the different decades of Capra films. – This is a WHAT claim because it can be substantiated by primary source evidence.

(2) Show that families especially hard-hit by the Depression went to see Capra films. This could be done by comparing ticket sales from various regions of the US and showing that Capra films were most popular in poor areas or by referencing newspaper articles that discuss crowd attendance. – This is a WHAT claim because it can be substantiated by primary source evidence.

(3) Draw a meaningful conclusion about why poor families were especially attracted to Capra's films – This is a WHY claim about the historical significance of the two WHAT claims.

In other words, (1) and (2) alert the reader about WHAT will be argued, while (3) tries to explain WHY a study of when Capra's films can yield a meaningful conclusion about life during the great depression.

4) Frank Capra, who rose to prominence as one of the greatest and most popular film directors in the country during the 1930s, was a one-of-a-kind man incapable of doing any wrong. His films melted people's hearts and made many happy even during the great depression.

Commentary: This is an opinion statement! There is no evidence that can substantiate the claim that Capra was a "one-of-a-kind man"

5) Frank Capra's work marks a turning point in history of filmmaking. His film production choices have had a lasting influence on the film industry and continue to impact when and how films are released.

Commentary: This could be an academic thesis for a long book. However, it is not specific enough for a short paper. Why? To demonstrate that Capra's work was a turning point in filmmaking history, one would have to consider a large sampling of films and filmmakers before and after Capra. Then, one would have to make an argument about Capra's impact by showing how filmmakers since the 1930s have adopted some of his stylistic innovations. To show that Capra still has an impact on today's film industry and marketing choices, one would have to provide an exhaustive comparison of film release dates and how they correspond to socio-economic trends. This is impossible to do in a short paper. If a thesis statement is not specific enough to be fully proven within the constraints of the paper, then it becomes nothing more than an OPINION.

In theory, if the topic sentence claims of the body paragraphs are correctly formulated and identify the argument of each paragraph, the thesis statement could be formulated by simply summarizing the topic sentences.

What is a conclusion?

The purpose of a conclusion is to

1. Summarize argument of body to remind the reader what you have already said.
2. Make a broader claim about the historical significance of your argument. This is your chance to elaborate the significance claim that you made in your thesis.

A successful history paper therefore answers three levels of historical questions:

1. Thesis: What does the primary source reveal about topic/prompt?
2. Body Paragraphs: What does your chosen evidence from primary source reveal about topic/prompt?
3. Conclusion: What does the argument you made in the body of essay reveal about the society in which that source was produced?

Instructions

With your assigned partner(s) assemble an essay on the *Song of Roland*, using the three paragraphs that you identified in the Saylo discussion as the body of your essay, and add an introduction and conclusion.

You may also want to add transitions and/or slightly tweak the body paragraphs.

You must work collaboratively with your group. Define a font color for each group member. Group members will be graded on the content of their contribution as well as their peer review of other members. Google docs might be the best forum for completing this assignment.

Your essay should be double-spaced, 12pt font, 1-inch margins. Make sure to include a key identifying the color font used by each group member.