Writing a Reaction Paper, Review, and Critique
Give your own reaction and comment something about it.
Today's Society

Sure glad the hole isn't at our end.
The Wall – A short film

1. What was the film about? Answer it in three sentences.

2. Did you like the film? Why or why not? List the reasons below.
3. Which part of the film did you like best? Why?

4. Which part of the film did you not like? Why?
Reaction Papers, Reviews, and Critiques?

These are specialized forms of writing in which a reviewer or reader evaluates any of the following:

- Scholarly Work
- Designs
- A Work of Art
- Graphic Designs
Reaction Papers, Reviews, and Critiques

- Usually range in length from 250 to 750 words
- Critical assessments, analyses or evaluation of different works.
Reviewers use both proofs and logical reasoning.

Presents an analytical response to a book or article.
Reaction Papers, Reviews, and Critiques

- These are not simply summaries
- Critique = Cynicism and pessimism
- Do not rely only on mere opinions
Reaction Papers, Reviews, and Critiques

These are not simply summaries

Critique = cynicism and pessimism

Do not rely only on mere opinions
Critical Approaches in Writing a Critique
Formalism mainly to do with structural purposes of a particular text. It is the study of a text without taking into account any outside influence.
Formalism

- The name of the author is not important
- The time in which the author lived is not important
Formalism

• The political belief of the author is not important
• The actual reader is not important
Formalism

Intrinsic properties and treats each work as a distinct work of art. The key understanding a text is through a text itself.
Common aspects looked into in Formalism:

- Author’s techniques in resolving contradictions within the work.
- Central passage that sums up the work
- Relationship of the form and the content
- Unity in the work
Feminism

the advocacy of women’s rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes.
Feminist literary criticism recognizes that since literature both reflects culture and shapes it, literary studies can either perpetuate the oppression of women or help to eliminate it.
Feminist Criticism

Presents women as subjects of socio-political, psychological and economic oppression
Common aspects looked into in feminism:

- How culture determines gender.
- How gender equality is presented in the text.
- How gender issues are presented in literary works.
- How women are socially, politically, psychologically and economically oppressed by patriarchy.
Reader Response Criticism

✓ Reviewer’s reaction as an audience of a work.
✓ A text does not have meaning until the reader reads it.
Common aspects looked into in reader response:

- Interaction between the reader and the text in creating meaning.
- The impact of reader’s delivery of sounds and visuals on enhancing and changing meaning.
Marxist Criticism

✓ It is the belief that literature reflects this class struggle and materialism
✓ It investigates how literature can work as a force for social change.
Marxist Criticism

✓ Differences between economic classes and implications of a capital system.
✓ Continuing conflicts between the working class and the elite.
Common aspects looked into in marxism

- Social class as represented in the work
- Social class of the characters
- Conflicts and interactions between economic classes.
Other critical approaches you can use:

- Post modern criticism
- Post-colonial criticism
- Structuralism
- Psychological criticism
- Gender criticism
- Ecocriticism
- Biographical criticism
- Historical criticism
- Mythological criticism
Structure of a Reaction Paper

Introduction (5%)

› Title of the book/article or work
› Writer’s name
› Thesis statement
Structure of a Reaction Paper

Summary (10%)

- Objective or Purpose
- Methods used (if applicable)
- Major findings, claims, ideas, or messages
Structure of a Reaction Paper

Review/Critique (in no particular order 75%)

- Does the writer explicitly state his/her thesis statement.
- What are the assumptions?
- What are the contributions of the work to the field where it belongs?
Structure of a Reaction Paper

Review/Critique (in no particular order 75%)

- What problems and issues are discussed or presented in the work?
- What kind of information are presented in the work?
Structure of a Reaction Paper

Conclusion (10%)

- Overall impression of the work
- Scholarly or literary value of the reviewed article, book or work.
- Benefits for the intended audience
- Suggestion for future direction of research
Reaction paper w/ no prescribed structure

Introduction

- Basic details about the material (title, director or artist name of exhibition/event)
- Main assessment of the material (for films and performances)
Reaction paper w/ no prescribed structure

Analysis or interpretation

- Discussion or analysis of the work (critical approach)
- What aspects of the work make you think it is a success or failure.
- Were there unanswered questions or plot lines? If yes? How did they affect the story?
Reaction paper w/ no prescribed structure

Analysis or interpretation

› How does the work relate in other ideas or events in the world.
› What stood out while you were watching the film or the performance?
Conclusion or Evaluation

- Reinforcement of main assessment
- Comparison to a similar work.
- Recommendation of the material (if you liked it)
Guidelines

For Articles and Journals

› Read to the work to be reviewed carefully.
› Relate the content of the work to what you already know about the topic.
› Focus on discussing how the book treats the topic (this book/work presents/author argues)
Guidelines

For Articles and Journals

› Report the type of analysis or mode of presentation.
› Examine whether the findings are adequately supported
› Suggest points for improvement of the reasoning
› Point out other interpretations that the writer missed out.
Guidelines

For artworks and other media

› Use speculative verbs (evoke, create, appear, & suggest)
› Make sure to describe it to the reader (do not spoil key events)
› Describe the material in simple terms (artworks)
Guidelines

General note:

- Did the work hold your interest?
- Did the work annoy or excite you?
- Did the work prompt you to raise questions to the author?
Guidelines

General note:

‣ Did the work lead you to some realizations?
‣ Did the work remind you of other materials that you have read, viewed or listened to?
Homework

Bring a copy of a short story entitled “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant and a short bond paper for the activity next meeting.

Note: Failure to bring your own copy means no written work.