

Project 2: Ideas Matter

In this piece, we will practice integrating our own ideas with those of outside sources. Our opinions, reactions, and points of view are still valid and important, but we need to be able to summarize, analyze, and respond to the ideas of others throughout our academic and professional lives.

What are the basic requirements of this piece? You will choose a TEDTalk video that interests you and write a three-part piece that summarizes the content and the speaker's presentation of the content, rhetorically analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of the presentation, and responds to the video in some way, either to the ideas presented or the presentation itself. We will get into more detail on these requirements below, but first we need to discuss the genre that will work best for this piece.

What kind of piece will we be writing? This will not look like a standard academic essay, with an introduction and a conclusion, smooth transitions, and an overall theme, thesis, or argument. The assignment isn't asking us to draw one large conclusion from our video and support that conclusion with evidence. Instead, we are going to create pieces more like an entry in a literature review or an annotated bibliography, in which you will engage with and think critically about information from an outside source. The purposes of this genre are to help us become familiar with what is being written about and discussed about an idea or field, and to understand how the source's information may or may not be useful to us in a future project. We will further discuss this genre and look at some examples during class.

Choosing a video: Spend some time browsing www.ted.com/talks. You can browse popular talks or search for a topic that you are interested in. There is no "perfect video," so be careful to only watch a few before choosing a video to write about. I suggest choosing a video that clocks in at between 12 and 18 minutes: a six-minute video may not give you enough to work with.

Summarize: Your summary should include both the content of the talk and how the speaker presents his or her information. What issue are they discussing? What is their position on that issue? Are they sharing information, raising awareness, or calling for an action or policy change? Does their presentation include video, images, or a performance of some kind? You can use quotes from the video at times, but the summary should be primarily in your own words. Be sure to make it as clear as possible that you are summarizing/restating the speaker's ideas by using signal phrases such as "Smith says" or "Smith adds". It may seem repetitive, but we need to be as clear as possible. We will also discuss using more specific and informative verbs than "says".

Rhetorically Analyze: We will need to look beyond the surface of the video and analyze the choices the speaker made, making claims about why they may have made those choices and evaluating their effectiveness. Why do you think the speaker wanted to give this talk? What benefits might the speaker receive for presenting this information? If the speaker doesn't say so outright, what kinds of action might he or she be calling for? Who might be the audience he or she hopes to reach through this talk? How does the speaker's use of visual aids help them reach their audience? How does the mode of delivery make the message more effective? Doing a little outside research on the speaker might be appropriate here. You will also need to provide evidence from the video (or from your research) to support your interpretations. This is a type of rhetorical analysis, which we'll discuss during our course meetings.

Personally Respond: Here is where you can personally respond to the speaker's position and/or the speaker's presentation of the content. Did this video change your mind or illuminate something for you? Are you interested in something now that you weren't before? Did you choose the video because you were already interested in this subject? Are you going to be able to use anything you learned from this video in the future? Again, use details and evidence from the video to serve as the foundations for your responses. Think about this section as a unique response based on your experiences that no one else would be able to have to this video.

Citations: We will begin to study how to cite and document sources in this project. We will be using MLA citation style, which can be reviewed in your textbook or online. We will also discuss appropriate formatting and usage in class.

Organization: It's important that you accomplish all three objectives and clearly separate the different types of writing. It should be very clear to your reader when you are summarizing and when you switch to interpretation or responding. However, that there might be a more effective way to organize your piece than into one big paragraph for each element. We will discuss different and effective ways to organize this piece in class.

Audience: Your audience in this piece is your classmates. You can assume that they have not watched this particular TED Talk, but that they are familiar with these videos in general.

Tone: The tone for this piece will be academic and formal. The tone for each section will be slightly different based on the type of writing. Use of the first person should be limited to the "response" section.

Length: The suggested length for this piece is between **1200 and 1700 words**. This will give you the space to accomplish all three tasks with sufficient detail and analysis. At a minimum of 1200 words, 300 words should be devoted to summary and response each, with 600 for analysis. However long your piece gets, try to have the summary and response section together equal the analysis section.

The learning goals for this piece are to:

- Learn to summarize information from sources in our own words
- Improve our interpretation and analysis skills
- Develop our ability to integrate our own ideas with information from sources
- Strengthen our understanding of effective organization
- Practice writing in the genre of annotated bibliography or literature review
- Gain experience using citation and documentation styles

Due dates:

- 6/25: Proposal (10 points)
- 6/30: Rough draft (20 points) and peer reviews (15 points each)
- 7/7: Final draft *Ideas Matter* (100 points)