Critical Reading of Controversial Topics
Reading 112

You must choose a topic from the Points of View Reference Center Database through Pima library. This database can be accessed online through MyPima or from a computer on campus. Use the following route:

Student Resources » Library » Online Resources » Reference Resources >> Hot Topics and Current Issues >> Points of View Reference Center

Once you are in the Points of View Reference Center you will need to choose a topic that holds some interest for you. You have 3 options for doing this:

1. If you have a specific topic you are interested in learning more about, type it into the search box and locate it that way. Remember to be flexible with your search terms
2. Browse by category. If there is a category that piques your interest choose that category and look at the topics within it. Choose one of those topics.
3. View all topics. This option will give you a list of all topics in the database by alphabetical order. You can choose a specific topic from this list.

In order for the topic to be a viable one for this assignment you will need to be sure that the topic has available each of the following:

1. Overview
2. Point
3. Counterpoint

Print in full each of the above. There may also be a Critical Analysis available. You are not required to print the critical analysis, but it may be helpful to you in better understanding the topic and the arguments of the authors.

You assignment consists of five parts:

1. Respond in full to the Part I analysis questions presented in the “Critical Reading and Evaluating Arguments” assignment
2. Read the overview of the topic. Using your paraphrasing and summarizing skills, summarize the issue that you will be learning more about (Part II).
3. Read the point and counterpoint articles, annotating as you do so (Part II).
4. Respond in full to the Part III analysis questions presented in the “Critical Reading and Evaluating Arguments” assignment. You must answer these questions for both articles.
5. Debrief by discussing what you learned while doing this assignment (Part IV)

You will need to turn in the articles when you turn in your assignment.

For extra credit answer the questions at the end of the point and counterpoint articles. Extra credit will be based on the completeness of your answer to these questions.
Critical Reading and Evaluating Arguments

Part I (Before Reading)

1. Based on the titles, what is the controversial issue?
2. Briefly describe your stance on this issue. What do you already know about this issue? How does it affect you? Why do you believe the way that you do?

Part II (During Reading)

1. Read the Overview article in full, annotating while you read. In a concise 1-2 paragraphs summarize the issue you will be learning about.
2. Annotate the point and counterpoint articles while reading.

Part III (After Reading) ---Review your notes and chapters 4, 5, and 6 in Academic Reading for help in answering following questions.

1. List out the following presented in this article
   a. Issue
   b. Claim
   c. Support(s)
   d. Refutation

2. Identify and give examples of the type(s) of claims the author uses (value, policy, fact)
3. Identify and give examples of the type(s) of support the author uses (reason, evidence, emotional)
4. Identify and give examples of the type(s) of evidence the author uses (personal experience, examples, statistics, comparisons, analogies)
5. Briefly discuss whether or not the evidence provided is relevant to the issue and the author’s claim.
6. Are there any problems with the author not clearly defining terms or making unsubstantiated cause and effect statements? Identify the problems.
7. Does the author use any unfair emotional appeals (e.g., bias language, false authority, association, common folk appeal, ad hominem, join the crowd appeal)?
8. Identify any errors in reasoning (e.g., circular, hasty generalization, non sequitur, and false cause, either-or).
9. Describe the author’s overall tone.
10. What is the author’s purpose? Is his or her purpose obvious, or does he or she appear to have a different purpose on the surface?
12. Does the author have any omissions in his or her argument? Explain.

Part IV (Debrief)
Discuss what you learned from this assignment. Use the following questions as a basis for your discussion.

Based on your answers to the questions in Part III, which author do you believe makes a better case? Explain why. Is this the side of the argument you agree with? How did your opinion about the issue affect your analysis of the articles? What are some things you learned about the issue from reading these articles? What more would you like to know about this issue?

-Lisa Da Deppo, Pima Community College 2009