

Writing Lesson Week 3



**UNDERSTANDING AND ANALYZING
CONTEXT, BREAKING DOWN PROMPTS, AND
VIEWING WRITING AS A PROCESS**



Context is Important



THERE IS NO TEXT WITHOUT CONTEXT



Contextual Analysis



- There is no text without context
- Think of a text as part of a larger conversation
- Examine texts based on the setting/scene from which it emerges
- Understand texts through the lens of their environments



4 Categories for Analyzing Context



1. Author's life and works
2. Context of publication
3. Larger conversation
4. Author's political goals



1. Author's Life and Works



- Who is the author? (research as much information as possible about who is writing the text)
- What other texts has the author written?
- How does this particular text fit in the conversation of other texts the author has written? How is it similar or different?
- What motivated the author to write this text?



2. Context of Publication



- Who is the intended audience? (research as much as you can about the place where the text first appeared and who the intended audience is)
- How does the occasion/forum/medium of the text and what effects might that have?
- How would the text be written differently if it had appeared elsewhere?
- What motivated the particular venue to publish the text?



3. Larger Conversation



**this will be particularly helpful for your final essay*

- What historical events influenced the text to be written?
- What other concurrent pieces of cultural conversation (other articles, speeches, legal documents, tv shows, websites, etc.) engage/engaged in this topic?
- Based on your findings, how does the text you are analyzing fit into the larger conversation? What does this text seem to be responding to?



4. Author's Political Goals



- What was the author's purpose in writing the text?
- What social change (change in policy, behavior, attitude, or thinking) is the author hoping to bring about through her/his text?



Writing as a Process



**POLISHING YOUR WRITINGS, ONE STEP AT A
TIME**



Steps in the Writing Process



1. Read, write, and discuss
2. Breakdown the prompt
3. Outline your ideas
4. Write a “shitty first draft” –Anne Lammott
5. Get feedback from peer review
6. Revise, revise, revise
7. Submit your most polished version of your writing
8. Reflect



Breaking Down the Prompt



**MAKING SURE YOU HAVE EVERYTHING
COVERED**



Breaking Down the Prompt



- Carefully and thoroughly read through the entire essay prompt while making mental notes of the expectations
- Now, let's break it down into smaller “doses.”
- As we do this together, write down notes on your laptop or in your notebook.



Breaking Down the Prompt



- What can we learn from the assignment title? “Final Rhetorical Synthesis Essay”
- This assignment emphasizes the tribal nationhood concepts and the rhetorical terminology we've discussed throughout our course.
- For this essay, you will create a rhetorical analysis of two tribal constitutions of your choice.



Breaking Down the Prompt



- Your essay will focus on each constitution's use of specific kinds of evidence to support its argument, how the argument is structured and constructed, and why it is effective/successful.
- It is also important to discern elements of context embedded in each constitution—the clues that suggest what the argument is responding to, both in the sense of what has been written before it and in the sense that it is written for an audience in a particular time and place – and to evaluate how effectively the argument persuades the audience within this specific context (the specific American Indian tribe's experience/history/worldviews.)



Breaking Down the Prompt



- You will consider how major positions advanced in these texts relate to each other, and you will evaluate claims representative of these positions.
- You will formulate your own question about some aspect of the issue, or present your own definition of the problem.
- You will conclude by discussing some of the relative strengths and weaknesses of these positions.
- Lastly, relate to your current life as the context from which to understand and evaluate some of the texts explored in this assignment.



Breaking Down the Prompt



- Page Requirement
- Due Date
- Formatting
- Criteria for Evaluation



What Next?



- Now, you should decide which 2 Constitutions you'd like to rhetorically analyze and compare in your essay.
- You are welcome to use the Hopi Constitution as one of your choices.
- You may also decide to use your own tribal Constitution as one of your choices.
- Then, choose **one** common denominator between the two. For example, you may be interested in how the constitutions handle land rights, citizenship, finances, etc, but make sure to focus on just one of these topics that interests you the most.
- Locate the 2 Constitutions you decided on and begin reading, annotating, and charting the texts.
- Begin analyzing ***context*** by using outside research. **Make sure that you're keeping track of ALL outside sources** that you use because you'll need to include them in your Works Cited page.

